

“Breaking A Shabby Mentality”

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Sermon Study Guide

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Key Scripture: Malachi 1:6-14 NIV

6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

7 "You place defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' "By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. 8 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

9 "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"-says the LORD Almighty. 10 "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. 11 My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

12 "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.' 13 And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty. "When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. 14 "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.

Have you ever seen a rundown house? Things like broken windows, peeling paint, an unlevel foundation and holes in the roof are things that come to mind. I think of a house that no one has lived in or cared for in years. No one has taken pride in it. No one has kept it up and the signs have caught up with the house that was once someone's home. What is a "Shabby Mentality" when it comes to the life of a Christian? At what point does your Christian walk become shabby like the house? Now, while we are not saved by our works, we are saved to do good works and grow in our spiritual life (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Definition of Shabby:

Run down, worn, dilapidated, inferior

Question 1: Are you expecting God to bless you while you are offering Him shabby worship?

Question 2: Are you expecting God to bless you while you are offering Him shabby time. What about shabby giving?

Luke 14:25-17

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. 27 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, any of you who do not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

34 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? 35 It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

In this passage, Jesus sets the definition of following Him. Here we see that the cost of discipleship was extremely high. It wasn't just a "weekend warrior" mentality, but an all-out devotion to Jesus. Jesus uses the words like "hate" in reference to different family members as He speaks about discipleship. Jesus turns to this crowd and speaks to them in the strongest possible terms: Unless a person "hates" even his close family members, even his own life, he can't be a disciple.

If you take this literally, it is shocking. Jesus means it to be shocking, jolting, provoking real listening. Hating, detesting is not neutral. It does not mean ignoring someone. It does not imply disinterest. It means to actively despise.

How can Jesus, who teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves, turn around and instruct us to hate our closest family members? This is the question in every heart that hears these words.

Jesus is using hyperbole, an overstatement in order to make a point with maximum impact. We've seen this before in Jesus' teaching style.

- Cutting off one's hand (Matthew 5:29-30)
- A camel passing through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24)
- Accepting violence and robbery without resistance (6:29)
- A timber in one's eye (Luke 6:41-42)

Jesus states something in a striking, unforgettable way, a way that challenges us and forces us to think. I think that's what he's doing here.

What does Jesus mean by telling us that we must hate our closest family members? He is contrasting our allegiance to Jesus in the strongest possible way. No earthly tie, however close, must take precedence over our allegiance to and obedience of Jesus. He is Number One -- by far! No person even comes close!

But it does mean that following Jesus is to take first priority -- even if it is painful, difficult, and misunderstood. Jesus says to the crowds travelling with him: Unless you place me as the first priority, over every other priority in your life, you can't be my disciples.

Let's take a look at a passage on how we rob God, or have shabby giving, and sometimes aren't even aware of it.

Malachi 3:9-12 (Message)

*8-11 "Begin by being honest. Do honest people rob God? But you rob me day after day. "You ask, 'How have we robbed you?' "The tithe and the offering—that's how! And now you're under a curse —the whole lot of you—because you're robbing me. Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams. For my part, I will defend you against marauders, protect your wheat fields and vegetable gardens against plunderers." The Message of God-of-the-Angel-Armies.
12 "You'll be voted 'Happiest Nation.' You'll experience what it's like to be a country of grace." God-of-the-Angel-Armies says so.*

God starts out by telling His people that they have robbed Him. What a statement from God! What would you say at this point? Not only once God said, but DAILY! Ouch! The people are not even aware that their relationship has been suffering for days, maybe even months. They seem confused and shocked that they had done something wrong.

Question 1: *Have you ever been to a point in your Christian walk that you didn't realize how far you had slipped away from God?*

Question 2: *What did it take for you to realize you had been "robbing God"?*

God told them that they were under a curse! But, did He leave them without hope and under a curse? Absolutely not! He told them how to correct their relationship with Him. By bringing the whole tithe to God they would be blessed. In fact, it's the only place in scripture God says "I dare you". The blessings would be bigger than their wildest dreams. He also promised them protection against enemies and famine, not to mention being voted "Happiest Nation."

He ends by saying that grace will be upon the country. Grace comes when we sell out to God. How do you know you'll get grace and blessing? The end of the chapter says, "God says so." Now that's assurance.

What does it mean to "sell out" to God? Let's take a look at another scripture.

John 6:66-69

66-67After this a lot of his disciples left. They no longer wanted to be associated with him. Then Jesus gave the Twelve their chance: "Do you also want to leave?" **68-69**Peter replied, "Master, to whom would we go? You have the words of real life, eternal life. We've already committed ourselves, confident that you are the Holy One of God."

Lots of Jesus' disciples left him during difficult and trying times. Others fully devoted themselves to Him. I think it's interesting how the Message paraphrases Jesus' response. It says, "He gave them their chance." We are all faced with many chances to leave or follow Christ. Peter responded by saying, "Master, to whom would we go? You have the words of real life, eternal life."

Question 1: *If you left Jesus, where would you go? Would you go backwards or forwards?*

Question 2: *What is worthy of a "sell out"?*

WHEN CHRISTIANITY BECOMES SHABBY

How do you know when your Christian walk has become shabby? Here are some key signs.

1. SLOPPY WORSHIP

Malachi 1:6-7 says:

6"Isn't it true that a son honors his father and a worker his master? So if I'm your Father, where's the honor? If I'm your Master, where's the respect?" God-of-the-Angel-Armies is calling you on the carpet: "You priests despise me! "You say, 'Not so! How do we despise you?' "By your shoddy, sloppy, defiling worship. "You ask, 'What do you mean, "defiling"? What's defiling about it?' **7**"When you say, 'The altar of God is not important anymore; worship of God is no longer a priority,' that's defiling. And when you offer worthless animals for sacrifices in worship, animals that you're trying to get rid of—blind and sick and crippled animals—isn't that defiling? Try a trick like that with your banker or your senator—how far do you think it will get you?" God-of-the-Angel-Armies asks you.

Sloppy worship, as defined by God in scripture above, is: no respect, not a priority, worthless sacrifices, shoddy and deceiving.

Question 1: *On a scale of 1 to 10, how would God rate your worship lifestyle? I'm not talking about your worship during a worship service.*

2. SLOPPY SACRIFICE

Malachi 1:8 says:

And when you offer worthless animals for sacrifices in worship, animals that you're trying to get rid of—blind and sick and crippled animals—isn't that defiling? Try a trick like that with your banker or your senator—how far do you think it will get you?" God-of-the-Angel-Armies asks you.

Can you imagine taking fake \$100 bills to the bank to make your house payment? What would happen? I'm sure you'd be arrested. Most of us would be too scared to do that because either we'd lose our house or become arrested.

Question 1: *Why don't we respect God enough to give him true sacrifice?*

In 2 Samuel 24:24, David talks about true sacrifice. He didn't want to offer God something that cost him nothing.

24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels ^[a] of silver for them.

True sacrifice costs you something. It may be time, money, effort, or sleep. It should make you sweat and have to give up things that really matter.

Question 2: *Does your sacrifice cost you anything? What have you truly given up for the Lord?*

3. PHONY, EMPTY-HEADED, WORSHIP SERVICES

Have you ever been to a worship service that didn't honor God? I mean, you didn't feel His presence at all and you just couldn't wait to get out of there? Have you ever watched someone in a worship service "go through the motions?"

2 Timothy 3:5 (NIV) says some worship has a form of godliness but denies the power of God. It goes on to say have nothing to do with them! Does that mean quit? Maybe, if it cannot be changed, but that an exception not a rule. It means make the worship service authentic. How do you do that? You be authentic in your worship. It will spread like a wild fire. Get involved, don't be a pew sitter or a complainer that worship is bad. Make it good by lifting your hands and voice and truly worship God. Let others see what true worship is all about.

Question 1: When you experienced a service that was lacking, what did you do to help it? Did you sit with your arms folded and complain or did you get in the middle of it and model worship?

Question 2: Before the service begins, what are some ways we can prepare for the time we spend in worship with other believers?

4. A BORED BELIEVER

Are you a bored believer? Malachi 1: 12-13 in the Message bible says that:

¹²⁻¹³**"All except you. Instead of honoring me, you profane me. You profane me when you say, 'Worship is not important, and what we bring to worship is of no account,' and when you say, 'I'm bored—this doesn't do anything for me.' You act so superior, sticking your noses in the air—act**

superior to me, God-of-the-Angel-Armies! And when you do offer something to me, it's a hand-me-down, or broken, or useless. Do you think I'm going to accept it? This is God speaking to you!

God called his people “stuck up” when they say they are bored with Him. He basically called them spoiled brats who think they are better than God and without God. Have you ever acted this way? Most of us would say no, but when we come to church sometimes, worship only on the weekends, tithe when we can afford to, serve when someone begs us long enough, read our Bibles when we face a problem or pray ten minutes a week (if that) we scream – I'M BORED!

Question 1: *Have you become bored with God? With church?*

Question 2: *Who is at fault for your boredom? God? The Church? You?*

How do we correct a shabby Christian mentality?

I think Romans 12:1-3 (Message) has the answer:

1-2 So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. 3I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

Reread this scripture and write down the ways we can overcome a shabby Christian mentality?

Romans 6:6-14 (Message) says:

6-11Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. We know that when Jesus was raised from the dead it was a signal of the end of death-as-the-end. Never again will death have the last word. When Jesus died, he took sin down with him, but alive he brings God down to us. From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did. 12-14That means you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don't give it the time of day. Don't even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time—remember, you've been raised from the dead!—into God's way of doing things. Sin can't tell you how to live. After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God.

Jesus gave us the victory over a shabby mentality and way of living. We are victorious through Him! We are conquerors over death because He was. We inherit eternal life in heaven and a blessed way of life on this earth because of his life-saving resurrection. We are now wholeheartedly and full-time Jesus' disciples. We now live in the freedom of God!