

Malachi 1:6-7

*"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, "How have we despised Your name?" "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, "How have we defiled You?" In that you say, "The table of the LORD is to be despised."*

We can easily walk through our life blissfully ignorant about the problems in our relationship with the Lord. This certainly is the case for the priests in Malachi's day. They continued on, business as usual, and yet they could not see there were problems with their worship. What would God say about the worship we conduct here on Sunday morning? The Book of Malachi should cause us to inspect our own hearts lest we hear these very words spoken about our worship as priests who despise God's name. Would we turn to God and say, "At least we showed up! How are we despising Your name?" It is so easy for us to live in denial or even ignorance when it comes to our worship of God.

The Hebrew word "to despise" literally means to ascribe little worth or to undervalue something. To despise God is not to walk into a church and curse Him, but to come into the house of God and undervalue who He is. The first place that will be seen is in our worship. It is a dangerous thing to walk into worship undervaluing the God of all creation. Is it possible that we have come to worship because we like the stained glass, like the music, enjoy the people — because the elements of worship have become more important than the God we have come to worship? From observing our external acts others may think we are worshipping but the attitude of our heart shows we are despising God.

We need to learn lessons from this lax priesthood lest we fall into the same lukewarmness in our spiritual lives as Christians. Their worship was careless and the service was heartless. It is easy to become familiar with the service and from that familiarity allow contempt to creep into our worship. If our heart is not in our worship, it becomes burdensome. Let us learn the lessons of Malachi and see how God measures the value of worship by the value placed on it by the worshipper. If it does not cost us anything, why would we think God would give it value?

In God's eyes our bodies are an offering, our resources are an offering, and our praise is an offering. Are we a living sacrifice to God? Can we honestly say we give from the best of our resources to God? When we sing, do we praise Him from the depths of our soul? There is a charge we are to keep as the priests of the Living God and there is a trust to keep when we claim Christ as our Lord. Are we bringing Him our best, or are we deceiving ourselves by thinking our acts of worship are deceiving God who sees within our hearts?