

## UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

### **TEXT: MALACHI 1:6-14**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. I have entitled this morning's message, "Unacceptable Worship."
2. According to the Bible, much worship is unacceptable to God. Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8, 9).
3. Genesis 4:4, 5 says the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.
4. Throughout the Old Testament we see many corrupt priests. We think of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1, 2) and the wicked sons of Eli (I Sam. 2:12-17).
5. King Jeroboam made two calves of gold, built his own temple, and then "made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (I Kings 12:31).
6. Throughout history there have always been men that go through religious rituals but their hearts are not right with God.
7. The priests back in Malachi's day were dishonoring God by their wicked ways. This is my application: today all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are priests.
8. First Peter 2:5 says Christians are "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
9. First Peter 2:9 says we are "a royal priesthood."
10. We call this doctrine the priesthood of the believer.
11. The priests in Malachi's day dishonored God by despising His name (1:6), by disparaging His altar (1:7), and by snuffing at His offering (1:13).

#### **I. BY DESPISING HIS NAME (1:6)**

1. God's name represents His person. God's name represents all that He stands for. Therefore, when men despise God's name, they are despising God (1:6b).
2. This is one of the ways in which they were dishonoring God. A son is supposed to honor his father. The fifth commandment says, "Honor thy father and thy mother..." (Exodus 20:12).
3. In the Bible, God is identified as our Father. Isaiah 63:16 says, "Thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."

4. Isaiah 64:8 says, "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."
  5. Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9).
  6. Therefore, God wanted to know, "If I then be a father, where is mine honor?" (1:6).
  7. They were not honoring God. We are to honor God, and obey God, and love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength.
  8. And yet many people say they love God and honor God but they are insincere. That is why our Lord said, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6).
  9. After being rebuked by God, they had the audacity to challenge God – to actually contradict Him (1:6b).
  10. In fact, the book of Malachi is marked by eight contradictions – eight instances where the people of Israel, insensitive to their own sinfulness, ask the LORD for evidence of their wrongdoing (1:2, 6, 7; 2:13, 14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13).
  11. Their talking back to God demonstrates their spiritual insensitivity and self-deception. Romans 9:20 says, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"
  12. The priests of Israel "despised" God's name (1:6), but His "name shall be great among the Gentiles" (1:11). Today over 2.2 billion people (one-third of the world's population) profess faith in Christ.
  13. While many of these people are not born again, it is certainly true that today God's name is "great among the Gentiles" (1:11).
  14. Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul said, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).
  15. The apostle Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
  16. Yes, His "name shall be great among the Gentiles" (1:11).
17. *The Name of Jesus is so sweet,  
I love its music to repeat;  
It makes my joys full and complete,  
The precious Name of Jesus!  
"Jesus," O how sweet the Name!  
"Jesus," every day the same;*

*"Jesus," let all saints proclaim*

*Its worthy praise forever! – William C. Martin*

18. They dishonored God by despising His name (1:6), and they also dishonored God by disparaging His altar.

## **II. BY DISPARAGING HIS ALTAR (1:7)**

1. The priests foolishly asked the Lord, "Wherein have we despised thy name?" (1:6). The Lord answered them (1:7). They were offering polluted bread and blemished sacrifices (1:7, 8, 12, 13).
2. They were giving God their garbage, and they kept the best for themselves.
3. Again, they dared to talk back to God – "Wherein (how) have we polluted Thee" (1:7). They were treating God's altar with contempt (1:7).
4. This happens all the time. People are not right with God but they come to church and act real pious. They even take the Lord's Supper, stand up and pray, and sometimes even preach!
5. According to God's law (Deut. 15:21), they were specifically forbidden to bring blind, lame, and sick sacrifices to the Lord's altar. When the priests accepted these polluted sacrifices, it was "evil" (1:8).
6. God points out that they would not dare bring these unacceptable sacrifices to the governor because they knew he would not like it. They knew he would not be pleased (1:8), that he would feel insulted. Yet they thought nothing about giving God their garbage.
7. Read Malachi 1:8 carefully and allow me to make an analogy. If the governor or some other important official made an appointment with you, you would not dare bring him a polluted offering. You'd give him your best.
8. But do you give God your best? Are you faithful with your tithes and offerings (cf. Malachi 3:8, 9).
9. Listen to these words from G. Campbell Morgan, "Sacrilege is centered in offering God something which costs nothing. God looks for the giving at His altar of a gift that costs something."
10. Remember when King David wanted to buy the threshing floor of Araunah in order to build an altar unto the LORD.
11. Araunah wanted to give it to King David for free, but David said to him, "Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver" (II Samuel 24:24).
12. Beloved, God is not pleased with hypocrisy and lukewarmness. The church in Laodicea was sloppy and lukewarm, and the Lord Jesus told them, "So

then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16).

13. God says He would rather see the temple doors shut because their sacrifices were totally unacceptable to Him (1:10a).
14. Likewise, today I believe God would rather see many church doors shut because the worship is unacceptable to Him – hypocritical worshippers, worldly music, weak man-centered preaching, no fear of God, no holiness, etc.
15. When people come to church they ought to see that there is a big difference between the world and the church. But most churches are trying to make their church just about as worldly as possible.
16. The LORD said to the prophet Ezekiel that the priests of Israel had violated His law, and had profaned His holy things, and they “put no difference between the holy and profane,” neither had they “shewed difference between the unclean and the clean” (Ezek. 22:26).
17. The Gospel seldom is preached in many churches. The people are given shallow messages designed to make them feel good about themselves. God would rather see the doors shut (1:10).

### **III. BY SNUFFING AT HIS OFFERING (1:13)**

1. Charles L. Feinberg says, “They disparaged it and disdained the offering of the Lord; they snuffed at it, that is, they snorted and sniffed at it, treating it with utmost contempt” (*The Minor Prophets*).
2. They were complaining, "Behold, what a weariness is it!" (1:13). The priests of Israel were so far from God that they found their ministry tiresome.
3. There are many church people like that today!
4. They are weary of church.
5. They get tired of reading their Bibles. They get tired getting up for Sunday School. They are tired of praying. They are tired of going to prayer meeting. They are tired of coming back for Sunday night service. They complain: "What a weariness is it!"
6. D.L. Moody used to say, "I get weary *in* the work, but I never get weary *of* the work."
7. It's it strange that some people never grow weary of watching baseball games or playing with their cellphones or goofing off on the computer, but they are weary of going to church.
8. A lot of folk are weary of strong preaching and so the preacher tones down the message and tries to entertain them.

9. Like the priests who "have snuffed at it" (1:13), many church people stick their nose up at strong Bible preaching.
10. And they keep giving God their garbage! (1:13b). To give God such an unsuitable ("corrupt" – vs. 14) sacrifice is insulting to God (1:13b).
11. God put a curse on "the deceiver" (1:14) who had a good animal in his flock and vowed to give it to God but then deliberately sacrificed a "corrupt thing" (1:14).
12. As if a man could deceive God?
13. Ananias, with Sapphira tried to deceive the church, but they could not deceive God, and they both died for their deception (Acts 5:1-11).
14. And yet to this day there are many people who think they can deceive God. They promise to give God their best but they do not. Their sacrifices are polluted. They give God that which is torn, and lame, and sick (1:13).
15. In other words, they give God their garbage.
16. How can a man or a woman sing "I Surrender All" and all the while have no intention of surrendering anything?

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Robert "Bobby" Moffat was born in Scotland in 1795. He died in 1883. When he was a young boy back in Scotland, they were taking up a special missions offering one day, and when the offering basket came to little Bobby, he asked the usher to put it on the floor.
2. He told the usher, "I have nothing to give to God but myself," and then he stepped into the basket with his bare feet.
3. Bobby Moffat was signifying that he was giving himself to God for His service.
4. When he was 21-years-old, Robert Moffat went to Africa as a missionary.
5. Years later, his daughter Mary became the wife of the great missionary David Livingstone.
6. Robert Moffat only took one furlough in his 52 years of service in Africa.