

Messenger!

A Journey Through the Prophecy of Malachi

Malachi 1:6-14

5 The Horror of Casual Worship, Part 2, The Curse of Spiritual Apathy

August 4, 2019

Malachi 1:6-14

6 " '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?'

7 "*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.'

8 "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the Lord of hosts.

9 "But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the Lord of hosts.

10 "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle *fire on* My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you.

11 "For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name *will be* great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering *that is* pure; for My name *will be* great among the nations," says the Lord of hosts.

12 "But you are profaning it, in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.'

13 "You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the Lord of hosts, "and you bring what was taken by robbery and *what is* lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the Lord.

14 "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the Lord of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

To the Glory of God

CK Chesterton lived during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, before TV or the Internet was invented. Chesterton was called the "Prince of Paradox", and was a very gifted writer who wrote about serious and eternal subjects, trying to make people think. Raised in "High Church" Anglicanism, Chesterton often said that what he sought was "Biblical Orthodoxy". In 1905, his search led him to write a book entitled "*Heretics*", which explored his pursuit of Biblical Truth, and his utter amazement at what he considered to be two great Paradoxes:

1. How can people live in a beautifully created world, filled with the Wonder and Beauty of God, and doubt God's existence?
2. How can genuinely saved worshippers become bored with God?

... and on page 13, Chesterton wrote:

"There is no such thing on earth as an uninteresting subject; the only thing that can exist is an uninterested person"

What Chesterton pondered was the very same thing that Malachi wrote about here in the Passage that Brother Vern just read to us:

The Curse of Spiritual Apathy

What was going through the minds of the Jews as they offered diseased and crippled animals as sacrifices? After God had moved to lift the foot of the Babylonians pagans that had been on the neck of God's people for 70 years, after God had driven the unbelievers off the Land, after God had moved so the Jews could rebuild the Temple and restore Jerusalem, after all of God's Goodness, after amazing displays of Grace, after the literal transformation of human history (that we still study to this day), after all of this, the Jew was *apathetic* toward God! The Jew

had become bored with worshipping God! The Jew had become lazy in his approach to God!

Now most all American parents of school-aged kids know this phrase. It's a very familiar phrase that parents hear nearly every year about this time. The novelty of the summer holiday has worn off, and many of the "fun things" that the children anticipated during the final weeks of school have all been enjoyed, and their "free time" has become very routine and very dull.

And so, the children come to their parents and say, *"I'm bored! There's nothing to do!"* And this sounds a lot like another statement that we hear a lot these days like, *"There's nothing on TV tonight!"*, even though we now have access to 500 channels. So, when children say that they've already done everything, they've played all the games, they've watched all the programs, and now, *"There's nothing to do"*. This usually provokes parents to roll their eyes and tell their children, *"I wish we had the luxury to be bored when I was your age."*

But the reality is that parents experience Apathy, too. The only difference is that, in *our* phase of life, Apathy usually doesn't take the form of *"there's nothing to do."* We're *constantly* churning through a never-ending list of Responsibilities, and Obligations, and Duties, and Tasks, and endless Commitments. So, for us, there's always *more* to do than we can possibly get done. So, our Apathy takes the form of a "loss of the Joy of Wonder".

But whatever Apathy looks like at any particular moment, we really need to pay attention to it. Because our Apathy is telling us something very important about ourselves, *especially* when it comes to God.

So, what exactly is "Apathy"? Well, very simply put, Apathy is *disinterest*. It's the condition of finding something or someone or some subject or some task or some event, or perhaps most everything *uninteresting*. And that means that "Apathy" is *not* the opposite of "Busyness". Apathy is the opposite of "Interest".

For example, when one of my grandchildren tells me, *"I'm bored, there's just nothing to do!"*, they don't literally mean that *there's nothing to do*. What they really mean is, *"I can't think of anything to do that interests me."*, or *"Of all the things that are out there to do, I'm not interested in any of them."* And that is why they don't usually make this kind of statement to me (neither did their parents), because they

know that I'm likely to provide them with something to do, something they're not going to be interested in doing at all.

But this explains why human beings can be very busy, and yet be completely apathetic about what they are doing at the same time. And that is because Apathy is not a "things to do" problem, it's a problem with *something, anything*, being interesting to us. But that means that Apathy is actually a problem with Joy. And Apathy is especially horrible when we are talking about Worship.

Last time we saw that the Priests of Malachi's day were *despising* the Name of God by the way they handled the sacrifices in the temple. Here are a few examples:

Malachi 1:8a; 13&14a

But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil?... You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the Lord of hosts, "and you bring what was taken by robbery and *what is* lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the Lord. But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, ...

... now *why* was this laid-back, cavalier, apathetic Worship "wrong"? God answers:

... for I am a great King," says the Lord of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

... so, uninterested, laid-back, cavalier, apathetic, and sloppy Worship *dishonors* the Greatness of God. And then God asked another Question:

... if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?...

The Priests were completely *uninterested* in God. They found no Joy in God, no Love for God. They no longer wondered after God, and whatever amount of Delight in God that they *may* have had at one time was gone. And so, they offered God their junk. They gave God their *least*. They sacrificed whatever mangy animal they could find so they

could appease their own consciences that they were actually worshipping God.

But God said this was unacceptable. In fact, verse 14 teaches that giving someone or something else your Best, your Heart, your Joy, your Love, your Devotion, and then being apathetic with God and giving God whatever is left makes you to be "Cursed". And that is why God the Holy Spirit "moved along" the Prophet Malachi to talk about:

The Curse of Spiritual Apathy

So, let us be honest with God and honest with ourselves this morning, and look at the three main Issues that Malachi brings up in this Passage:

1. The *Origin* of Spiritual Apathy
2. The *Essence* of Spiritual Apathy
3. The *Opposite* of Spiritual Apathy

1. The *Origin* of Spiritual Apathy

Malachi leaves us in no doubt about the Origin of Spiritual Apathy. It is the failure to see and feel and know and enjoy and treasure the Greatness of God. But from where does this Failure come? What is the Origin of being bored with God? What *causes* Spiritual Apathy? Malachi teaches that it comes *primarily* from a skewed understanding of God's Love. And the Prophet begins to make this clear back in verse 2 where God makes an amazing Statement:

"I have loved you", says the Lord.

... yet, apathetic Israel responded flippantly by asking:

"How have You loved us?"

... but remember how God answered that insulting Question. Notice that God did *not* say, "*Remember how I forgave you, and how I have cared for you, and all the times I have been patient with you, and have provided for you.*" Now all that is true, but God didn't respond like that.

He never even mentioned any of that. So, how did God respond to their Question, "*How have you loved us?*"

Malachi 1:2b-5

... *Was not Esau Jacob's brother?*" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and *appointed* his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness." Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; thus says the Lord of hosts, "They may build, but I will tear down; and *men* will call them the wicked territory, and the people toward whom the Lord is indignant forever."

Now may I suggest that most of us simply don't think along these lines when we are comprehending the Love of God. And if you ever respond to your wife like this, when she asks you, "*How have you loved me?*", you probably will need me to help you with some Marriage Counselling.

But this is *exactly* how God responded. Now before you think to yourself, "*Man, if God ever talked that way to me, I would just walk away and leave Him standing there!*" Look at how God Himself said that these Jews WOULD respond to what He just said in the very next verse:

Your eyes will see this and you will say, "The Lord be magnified beyond the border of Israel!"

So, what does God call attention to for this apathetic people? He speaks these ominous Words:

***Was not Esau Jacob's brother?*" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau..."**

... and a few weeks ago, we saw what that meant. It means that God's Love for Israel (Jacob) is an "*electing* Love". God chose Jacob, not Esau. God chose Israel, not Edom. And God's sovereign electing Love is both "free" and "unconditional", and is distributed according to God's Own Divine Prerogative. And we saw by definition that this means that God's Love simply *cannot* be compared to any other kind of love that humans experience.

So, when God asked, "**Is not Esau Jacob's brother?**", God was teaching that it isn't that Jacob was "better person" than Esau, or that Esau was a "worse sinner". Both of these men were sinners, and both deserved eternal Damnation. And this also teaches that God was not *obligated* to love either one of them. Esau had just as much natural claim on God's Love as Jacob did. But even though all that is true, God chose to sovereignly "set His Love" on Jacob and to leave Esau to himself.

And this tells us that in dealing with the Curse of apathetic Worship, God unfolds the nature of His Love *not* first as something "warm" and "gentle" and "kind" and "sweet", but as something "awesome" and very "strange" in its electing Freedom. And the Goal of experiencing God's Love is *not* to make you feel "warm" and "fuzzy", so you can pretend that you are the center of God's Heart. Instead, knowing God's Love rightly, fully, and biblically will make you tremble. And it will destroy your own Self-righteousness, it will do great damage to your Arrogance, and it will put you on your face.

There is, in God's Love, a great and awesome *Sovereignty* that reveals a majestic, omnipotent Creator, Who has no need of *anything* you offer, yet a God Who *genuinely* "wants" unworthy sinners to be near to Him so that we may delight in His Glory. And *that's* what God draws attention to first.

And then, God does the very *same thing* with the concept of His "Fatherhood", as we saw last time, in verse 6.

"If I am a Father, where is My Honor?"

And once again, when the children of Israel asked their insulting Question, "**How have we despised Your Name?**", God *could* have drawn attention to the "gentle" and "tender" dimensions of His Fatherhood. And God's Fatherhood *is* "gentle" and "tender". But God never brought that up. Instead, God did with the Issue of His Fatherhood *exactly* what He did with the Issue of His Love: He focuses attention on the *Majesty* of His Fatherhood. And so, God *didn't* ask them, "*Where is your Affection for Me?*" God asked, "*Where is My Honor from you?*"

That is the *first* way that God shows the Origin of Spiritual Apathy. It flows out from the failure to know and feel and love and

treasure the Greatness of God's sovereign Love and the Greatness of His majestic Fatherhood.

It is Greatness, in particular, that is *crucial* when worship is at stake. So, you might have a horse like "Flicka", or "Fury", or "Black Beauty", or a dog like "Rin Tin Tin", or "Lassie", or "Benji", that saves your life a hundred times. And you might have a deep affection for the animal and weep when it dies. But you are *never* tempted to bow down and worship it. The same is true of a human friend. You may have or develop a very close bond of friendship and love and unity with someone. But you *never* think of *worshiping* your friend. Why? Because one indispensable element in true Worship is GREATNESS, MAJESTY, and GRANDEUR.

So, when people are cursed with Spiritual Apathy, God *rescues* them by focusing attention *not* first on the *gentleness* of His Love or the *tenderness* of His Fatherhood, but in order to rescue us from the horror of this Curse, God focuses on the sovereign *Freedom* of His Love and the *Majesty* of His Fatherhood.

The second way God shows the Origin of Spiritual Apathy is by the logic of verses 11 and 14. Each of these verses is given as the Reason God rejects Casual Worship. So, please look at how verse 11 is connected to verse 10:

... I am not pleased with you," says the Lord of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you. For [BECAUSE] from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name *will be* great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering *that is* pure; for My name *will be* great among the nations," says the Lord of hosts.

In other words, the *Reason* Casual Worship is so reprehensible is because it fails to recognize the Greatness of God. And that is the exact *same* logic that God uses in the connection between verses 13 and 14:

... cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for [BECAUSE] I am a great King," says the Lord of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

In other words, Casual Worship, brought about by this Spiritual Apathy, is wholly unacceptable because it utterly fails to come to terms

with God's Greatness. And that tells us that the Origin of Spiritual Apathy is a failure to see and feel and love and treasure the Greatness of God.

But how does this cause Casual Worship? Malachi's answer:

Spiritual Apathy causes a person to become bored with God,
bored with the things of God, and, yet, excited about the world.

When a human is blind to the Greatness of God, it doesn't mean that he can't see at all. It simply means that that individual can't see the *best* thing, the most *beautiful* thing, the most *important* thing in the entire Universe. But he can still see. So, what fills this "spiritual vacuum" is the tin and the hay and the wood and the stubble of the fallen world.

In that cursed state, what the world *offers* becomes attractive. What the world *teaches* is believed. What the world *promises* is trusted. And all the shiny trinkets that Man can make and that money can buy become the *only* Source of Excitement and Joy. If you can't see the magnificence of the sun, you will be impressed with a flashlight with weak batteries. If you've never trembled and wondered after thunder and lightning, you'll be impressed with a cap gun. So, if you turn your back on the Greatness and Majesty of God, you'll fall in love with a world of shadows and short-lived pleasures. And I get all this from verse 13:

You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the Lord of hosts...

... these people are bored with God. And their basic attitude toward Worshipping God is: "*My, how tiresome it is!*" And that would be bad enough. Spiritual Apathy is a Curse and is Sin and it dishonors God. And that would be bad enough. But it never stops there. When a person is cursed with Spiritual Apathy, he always, always, always goes on into Casual Worship. Look what these people did next:

Malachi 1:13b

... you bring what was taken by robbery and *what is* lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the Lord.

So, *why* did they offer lame and sick animals for their sacrifice? Because they were busy? No. Because they didn't have the money? No. They offered blind and maim animals with mange as sacrifices to God because they were bored with God! These people no longer delighted in the Greatness of God, and their response to being bored with God was their casual Worship.

When the Maker of galaxies, and the Ruler of nations, and the Knower of all mysteries, and the Lover of our souls, becomes boring, then only one thing is left: we fall in love with the world. When a twelve-course meal prepared by the finest chef in all the world is boring, then an eight-day old PB&J sandwich that has been sitting on the floor of a hot car looks delicious. We must understand this one thing about ourselves: The human heart is *always* restless. It *has* to focus its affections on a treasure. And if that Treasure is not the risen Christ, it will be something else.

So, when God calls all those He has wondrously saved to not forsake the assembling of themselves together, when God calls those He rescued from eternal Damnation to put their nose in the Book and their knees on the carpet, when God calls those He set His Love on from before the foundation of the world to provoke one another to love and to good works, when God calls those He has mercifully delivered from countless Sin and Misery, and promised them a home in Glory-Land to live a life of separation and to pursue Holiness, how do people who are cursed with Spiritual Apathy respond?

Isaiah 29:13

Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,

... so, what should God *do* when they become bored with Him? What does God *say*?

Isaiah 29:14

Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed."

Friends, we live in an amazing day. 2400 years after Malachi wrote this, there is a virtual "sea" of people in modern America who lay claim to be saved, but who have no more inclination to order their lives so they can obey God than a man in the moon. *If* they feel inclined, and *if* it is convenient, and *if* they can work it into their busy, busy schedules, they will gather and worship the God, Who caught their falling soul and saved them from a devil's hell. And yet they have little or no conviction about their rebellion. Many wonder today if it is "worth it" to spend the only "free day" they have off from work and "waste that time" by sitting in Church worshipping the God, Who gave them Life.

Dear friends, we are actually witnessing the Curse of Spiritual Apathy right before our eyes, because wicked sinners having the audacity to be bored with God is not the rare exception anymore, it is the norm. And so, when it is time to bring the *best* sheep from our flocks, when it is time to prepare our hearts BEFORE we begin to worship, when it is time to set aside the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things, when it is time to dis-engage from the pagan world and enter into a time of honoring God as Father and edifying one another in Love, what do we do? May we not bring sheep with disease and broken legs. May we not steal a sheep to offer our theft to God. May we actually obey what David said in **Psalm 100:4**:

Enter His gates with thanksgiving *And* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

2. The *Essence* of Spiritual Apathy

The *Essence* of Spiritual Apathy is worthless, Man-made "religious activity". Or to be even more precise: it's "religious activity" that illustrates how *little* a person values God. That is the sense of verse 10:

Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle *fire* on My altar!

Now there's a little Hebrew word behind the word "**uselessly**" that is vitally important. The word is *hinam*. And it is used, for example, in **2 Samuel 24:24** in a way that's very similar to this verse, but the

translation is much fuller. Back then, David was trying to avert a plague. And to do so he needed a place to build an Altar to offer sacrifices to the Lord. And the threshing floor of a man named Araunah was in the right place. And so, this guy offers his threshing floor and his animals to David for nothing! But look how David responds to this:

No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing.

In other words, David valued God so much, the sovereign Freedom of God's Love and the Majesty of God's Fatherhood was so *satisfying* to his soul, that David could not bring himself to worship in a way that looks as if he loved money more than he loved God. Something valuable, like worshipping God, has to reflect the Reality that David is not bored with God. Because, if it was free or easy, it *cheapens* the value of it. David's worship has to *require* of him, so it can display the inherent Worth of the God he is worshipping. His worship can't be casual, it can't be the result of Spiritual Apathy. David's worship must proclaim that God, and not the world, was his Treasure.

Now you can say, "*Well that was just the way David was.*" And I agree with you. This is the thought pattern of a man who had a heart that was always *after* God. David was certainly not perfect, but he *panted* for God, he *sought* for God, and he *treasured* God. So, the Essence of Spiritual Apathy is empty, Man-made "religious activity". And this kind of lazy, cavalier, laid-back, nonchalant Worship DOES NOT express the Worth of God, because it *can't*. This kind of Worship proves beyond any doubt that their treasure is on the earth and that what they *really* love is the world.

But what kind of price should we pay for true Worship? Didn't Jesus pay it all? And if not, are we really saved? And if so, how could we add anything to what Jesus has already done? The Answer to defeat Spiritual Apathy and Casual Worship is:

- ✓ *Joyful* Worship
- ✓ *Purposeful* Worship
- ✓ *Deliberate* Worship
- ✓ *Knowledgeable* Worship

We have no ability to add any Value to what Jesus has already done for us. But what we *can* do, and what we *should* do, is *rejoice* in what Jesus has done, *celebrate* what Jesus has done, *marvel* at what Jesus has done, and *enjoy* what Jesus has done. But, in addition, we should *prove* that Jesus is the Treasure of the Universe by understanding Who He is, what He has done, and *why* we are worshipping Him, so that our Worship is *deliberate* and *knowledgeable*, and so we are NOT like the pagans of Ephesus who, according to what Dr. Luke wrote in **The Acts 17**, were worshipping an “unknown god”.

Dear friends, it is perfectly understandable for a recent convert to be ignorant about the things of God and the many Truths taught in the Bible. They have had no time to learn, because they have only recently been forgiven and made clean by the Blood of the Lamb. But it is unconscionable for those who have been saved for any length of time to not know and understand *what* genuine Christians are supposed to believe and *why* we are to believe it.

But, once again, we live in a day when ignorance of the Bible is at an all-time high. People, who say they have been saved for many, many years are completely ignorant about serious and important and deep and eternal Issues. And there is only one reason for this ongoing and pervasive Ignorance, they are bored with God.

Look, I understand that few churches today engage the people with genuine Bible Studies. I understand that Prayer has been basically relegated to something we do before and after something else. I understand that most people, who name the great Name of Jesus, have no intention of ever fasting before God. I understand that large numbers of people, who are in constant contact with these so-called “Para-church Ministries”, have no intention of ever being baptized in water by immersion. I understand that things like Doctrine and Biblical Truth are almost non-existent today. And I understand that holding people, who say they are saved, *accountable* to obey what the Bible teaches, is considered to be legalism and mean-spirited.

But the only reason that is true is because these people are either ignorant of what the Bible says, or else they really haven’t experienced the Miracle of the New birth in the first place and don’t care, or both. But that is *precisely* why we need to understand what Spiritual Apathy is, and make sure we’re not guilty of it.

3. The *Opposite* of Spiritual Apathy

And this raises the whole Issue of "Excellence in Worship". For surely it is true that "Excellence" is the *opposite* of "Casualness" in Worship. But what exactly *is* "Excellence?" I don't think it's helpful to talk about "Excellence" in the abstract. First, you have to define what the nature of True Worship is, and then define "Excellence in Worship" as those thoughts and attitudes and words and feelings and forms which most successfully let the "True Worship" happen.

And what is the *nature* of "True Worship?" I would put it like this. The nature of "True Worship" is Worship that does two things:

1. Worship that reveals and displays God's Value and Greatness.
2. Worship that seeks to sustain in the congregation that same spiritual sense of God's immense Worth and Beauty.

... or, to put it another way, True Worship:

- A. Flows normally and naturally out from a heart that *treasures* God above all human property and praise.
- B. Aims to inspire the same God-centered Passion to others.

So, what then is "Excellence in Worship?" It isn't about wealth or talent. It isn't that we have \$250,000 worth of music equipment or a world-class orchestra. One of the *best* ways to comprehend what "Excellence in Worship" *is* is to understand what it *isn't*. So, I want to contrast "Excellence in Worship" with the "dead-end streets" of Man-made and Human-engineered worship. And there are at least two of these "dead-end streets" that we need to try to grasp.

1. "True Worship" is NOT "Cool Professionalism"

Cool Professionalism is a "dead end street" because it defines Excellence in Worship mainly in terms of Technique and Style, rather than wondering after God. We must understand, dear friends, that any "performance" that does not express the inherent Worth of God, and that doesn't seek to inspire a God-centered Passion for God, is really not Worship in the first place, no matter how technically perfect it might be,

or how amazing it might make our five earthly senses feel. This is the difference between being "Sensual" and being "Spiritual".

Artificially trying to get people "in the mood" of being "Spiritual" by using colored lights and smoke machines to wow them with technology, trying to *manufacture* the Presence of God *sensually*, seeking to be "hip" or "cool" by dressing sloppy and spiking your hair to show how "in touch" with the modern culture you are, only *further* erodes their ability to actually worship God. If the electricity ever went out, many of these churches simply couldn't function.

God is honored and worshipped when He is known, and adored and marveled at, and trusted, and delighted in, and enjoyed. God is "lifted up" *not* with humanly engineered gimmicks, but when He is "seen" as Scripture is heralded, and when God so radically transforms our hearts that we genuinely love what we see. "Glad Obedience" *automatically* flows out from a person who has become "smitten" with affection for God, because He has seen the fullness of the Godhead in the Person of Jesus Christ.

2. "True Worship" is NOT "Warm Emotionalism"

Warm Emotionalism is also a "dead-end street" because it focuses on the *feelings* of the individual by *short circuiting* the understanding. Warm Emotionalism *always* employs manipulative means of "stirring up" enthusiasm. But is also always *neglects* the centrality of God and the *necessity* of extensive Teaching so that we may know God rightly and fully, in His true revealed Majesty, so that the God we are worshipping is actually the one, true, and living God revealed in both Creation and Scripture, and not some figment of our imagination.

The "street" or the "path" that has the *greatest* Promise for obtaining True Worship is the street of "*Conscientious* Spirituality", or "*Purposeful* Spirituality", or "*Deliberate* Spirituality". This is worshipping God *on purpose*. It is worshipping God because we have actually thought about Who He is, and what He has done, we have investigated the claims of Scripture, we have cried out to God for help, and we have come to the reasoned, logical conclusion that God is *exactly* Who the Bible says He is, and, therefore, He is *entitled* to our worship. He has *earned* our worship, and He is *deserving* of our worship. And we

are trusting that in worshipping God like this, we will obtain the fullness of Joy for ourselves.

This is not *contrived* or *manufactured* Worship. This is not making up for what we either don't know or don't really believe with excitement or by acting weird or silly. This is Worship that *automatically* flows out from a heart that has been captured by the Greatness of God, and that seeks humbly to express and inspire that *same* intensity for God without the distractions of errors or artificiality or inattention or inappropriateness or ostentatiousness.

O, how I beg God to teach the people of the Covenant of Peace Church how to worship Him! May God be Good to open our eyes to the Beauty and the Greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ! And may we be so changed that we love what we see! And may we all be changed into what we see! And may God deliver us from Spiritual Apathy and Casual Worship so that we may agree with what God spoke through Malachi:

for I am a great King," says the Lord of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations."

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.