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Habakkuk Malachi

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1 . HABAKKUK (1)

1 : 1 - 11

- 1.The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received.
- 2.How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?
- 3.Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.
- 4.Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.
- 5."Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.
- 6.I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.
- 7.They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.
- 8.Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour;
- 9.they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.
- 10.They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them.
- 11.Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."

Introduction : Importance of the Book of Habakkuk

- 1) It opened an amazing revelation of Justification by Faith**
- 2) A precise definition of the problem of evil**
- 3) It shows a maturing faith**

1. Habakkuk's Identity and Calling (v.1)

- a. A person who is capable of interpreting the history
- b. A person who warns through an apocalypse

2. Habakkuk's First Question (v. 2-4)

3. God's First Response (v. 5-11)

- a. Definition of Evil (v. 7, 11)
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Prayer

Introduction

1. Importance of Habakkuk

(1) The book that opened an amazing revelation of justification by faith

(1.1) If someone were to ask me which books among the Old Testament are importantly related to the New Testament, then I would reply with Habakkuk and Leviticus. Through Leviticus, we can learn the importance of worship. If Leviticus is not loosened, then Hebrews will not be loosened. First of all, the Book of Habakkuk has opened up a crucial revelation of the New Testament's Justification of Faith. Significance of the Justification of Faith in the New Testament is great.

In the Old Testament, there is a belief that salvation is received by passing through suffering and tribulation, but the belief of the Justification of Faith is found nowhere in the Old Testament except in Habakkuk. Only in Habakkuk, we find "the righteous will live by his faith." (Hab. 2:4 NIV) Thus, Habakkuk widely opens up the New Testament's revelation of salvation.

(1.2) Paul's epistle to the Romans has changed the course of history few times. It has changed Martin Luther and John Wesley. That is why Romans 1:17 is a very important scripture, and Habakkuk is responsible for opening up such a revelation. Also, there are Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38 which were opened up through Habakkuk.

The Romans epistle deals with who is righteous. The Galatians epistle emphasizes that these righteous people are established by faith. And the Hebrews epistle deals with who is the real righteous by emphasizing Christian life. Christian life is evidence of the righteous. These three, righteousness, faith, and Christian life, are one like the Trinity. If one of these three is not satisfied, then all three are not satisfied. If one of these three is satisfied, then all three are satisfied. It is not simple as, 'you are saved if you just believe,' but you have to satisfy righteousness, faith, and Christian life. Then, we have a confirmation of salvation and a guarantee that we will go to heaven if we were to die today. But if we do not have a clear confirmation of justification by faith, then salvation can only be confirmed by dying. Salvation can be confirmed after death.

We have to be clear on these three. And it is Habakkuk which has opened up this revelation. Just by this alone, Habakkuk has a great importance. But furthermore, how important is Habakkuk since it has turned Apostle Paul inside out? The Book of Habakkuk is important of itself due to its revelation. Habakkuk is also important because Habakkuk needs to be unraveled first before unraveling other scriptures.

(1.3) Currently, prophecies are important to our church. There are many ministries in our church, and we need to find out the exact will of God. We also need to precisely grasp

the historic calling so that we may know which direction our church needs to go during this historically important time. In our church, we do prophecy but prophecies may be little incoherent. Through this prophetic writing (of Habakkuk), the framework of the biblical prophecies need to stand accurately.

(2) The book that defines the problem of evil.

(1.4) The second importance of Habakkuk is that this book clearly defines who is righteous and who is evil more than any other books in the Bible. Other books of the Bible are ambiguous toward the source, origin, form, definition, root, and pattern of behavior of evil. But Habakkuk defines it clearly. Habakkuk clearly answers the difficult question like, why does evil exist in a good world that was created by God? Honestly, this is a very difficult question to answer.

In the past, people obscurely thought that there were an evil god and a good god in this world. Also in the 18th century, there was deism. People thought that God was impotent and a spectator and the universe operated within the law of nature. And Habakkuk lucidly explains about such theodicy.

(1.5) It has become more difficult to live in South Korea if you were to live honestly. It seems like people tend to do better if they live wickedly. It seems like it would be impossible to become rich if you were to live honestly. A person would profit more when he evades paying taxes, to lie, and to have a "right" connection. Most of people in prison do not believe that they are in prison because they have done something wrong. They believe that they are in prison because they don't have the 'right' person backing them up or the 'right' connection. Is this the norm? These matters are dealt in Habakkuk.

(1.6) Habakkuk deals with why God allowed evil, what will become of the wicked, why do the wicked exist throughout history. As a result, importance of Habakkuk is to know the history. How will history run its course? Habakkuk clearly defines the existence, source, and conclusion of the wicked in the relationship between the wicked and the righteous. Thus, when the book of Habakkuk opens up, you will be able to know God's amazing providence that moves personal, national, and world histories.

Through the book of Habakkuk, my eyes have been opened to see history. I have come to understand not only my personal history but Korea's national history, especially the Japanese Colonial Period, The Korean War. You can also have your eyes opened to see history when you carefully read the Book of Habakkuk.

(3) The book that shows a maturing faith.

(1.7) Habakkuk could not understand how the wicked can trample upon the righteous in the good world that God has created and how Israel, as a chosen nation by God, can live so wickedly. Therefore, Habakkuk began to resent. He did not resent over his personal

situation, but how the righteous were not able to live righteously when they had the righteousness of God. The resentment and despair toward God's righteousness is in Habakkuk.

A life of faith always begins with resentment. If you don't have resentment in your life of faith, you are either very spiritually mature or you do not focus your life on God and live according to your own will. But if anyone focuses their life on God, he cannot help but to plead to God since the world, national, and personal histories are irrational. It is written in Habakkuk 2:1 (NIV), "I will look to see what he will say to me." It is elegantly translated, but it is a complaint in the original text. It is resentment before God. It is a complaint to God; why are God's people having God's righteousness cannot accurately express righteousness?

(1.8) Resentment is the first thing that comes out in their spiritual maturity for people who focus their life on God. This is a privilege for the believers. Resentment forms when you focus your perspective toward God. When the righteous focus on God and perceive that God's will and desire are not being manifested in this world, it is natural for the righteous to resent. The righteous resent because they believe in God. A stranger does not cause despair, but parents may cause despair on their child. It is because the child trusts in his parents.

The Book of Habakkuk is important because Habakkuk did not try to resolve this resentment by himself or brought the resentment before men, but he took it to God. Habakkuk took his resentful life of faith before God, and his life of faith matured to an understanding life of faith, and from an understanding life of faith to thanksgiving and praise. In the third chapter (Hab. 3:17-18), Habakkuk gave thanksgiving and praises even though he may not had anything, but he would be joyful in God his Savior. Therefore, Habakkuk is also important in the maturity of faith.

(1.9) You cannot be happy in your life of faith if you cannot have your questions and resentment resolved by God. You may think that you are not miserable because this does not apply to you, but it only seems like you are not in misery. The truth is that you are enraged because of spiritual contradiction inside you. And this contradiction will clearly reveal itself in some form. It may reveal itself through finances if you do not have money, and it can also reveal itself in relationships.

For example, when someone hurts me, I may criticize that he is a bad person and have resentment toward him. Then, my personal history will not be resolved. But if I come to understand the person, then I can reflect upon myself through him, and my resentment will turn to thanksgiving and praise. This is very important.

There is a book called, *The Rebel*, by Albert Camus. Camus stated in his book that life without knowing God's purpose is a continual resistance. That is why the title of the book is "The Rebel." Failure to resolve contradictions I face before God will have me in a continual resistance. Thus, I need to find out God's purpose and plan that He has for me through resolving my resentment. Of course, a person like Joseph did not resent once. That was Joseph's strength. Although Joseph did not perform miracles or preached a great sermon, he did not

resent God once in his lifetime. You either have to be like Joseph or have your resentment be resolved by God.

Main Body

(1.10) Today's passage, Hab. 1:1-11, can be divided into 3 parts. The first part is verse 1, Habakkuk's discourse about his identity as a prophet and the role of a prophet. The second part is from verses 2 to 4, Habakkuk's first question to God. This is a petition of Habakkuk. And the last part is from verses 5 to 11, God's response to Habakkuk's first question.

The Identity of a Prophet and Calling (v. 1)

(a) A person who is capable of interpreting history

(1.11) Firstly, Habakkuk identified himself as a prophet. Prophecies in Korean churches can be divided into two trends. The majority of prophecies follow the trend of CI (Christian International, founder: Bill Hamon). This type of prophecy is fine in spiritual conditions like in the United States. But this type of prophecy has no influence in Korea because of its heavy spiritual bondage. It may be good for encouraging, but it is powerless to Koreans who are in a heavy spiritual bondage.

Prophecies are fulfilled when a person listens and obeys, but Koreans are in such tight bondage that they are not prepared to act even though they may hear a grand prophecy. So from this perspective, CI prophecies are difficult in Korea. Another trend is Jesus fortunetellers. This is an influence of a culture of diverse spirits. The sermons of the prophetic writings are very important in terms of providing accurate biblical framework of prophecy to church.

(1.12) Habakkuk's understanding of a prophet is a person who is able to interpret history. He is not only able to interpret history, but he also had to have an eye for looking into history's future and offer history's direction. This is an aspect of prophetic authority that church possesses. Church needs to present how God is leading by accurate directions.

In case of Amos, he was a prophet who was a spokesperson. God does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7) It was Prophet Amos' great identity as a prophet. Since Amos was a spokesperson of God, God moved when Amos spoke. Prophecy of Joel zooms in the future events through the present events. Current events are a prelude to the future events. Prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah stipulated present, future, and past events.

(1.13) In Habakkuk, it is implied that a prophet has to present an interpretation, future, and direction of history. Questions like, why do the wicked trample upon the righteous and why does Israel, a righteous nation, get trampled upon by a vicious nation like Babylon, are answered through the interpretation of history.

On a personal level, you have to interpret the history of the person who gives you distress. On Korea's national level, Koreans have to interpret the national history to understand why Korea was oppressed by Japan, why did The Korean War and **Gwang-Ju Massacre** (*Gwang-Ju Massacre (May 18 to 27, 1980) refers to the Korean Army suppressing an uprising against the newly president, Chun, Doo-Hwan, whom took power through the coup d'état. Estimates suggest up to 2,000 people have died.*) happen. And then, Koreans would look into the future of history.

Why is the righteous being trampled by the wicked? It is because you, the righteous, are deprived. Therefore, you will have to face **suffering** (*God does not use suffering as a punishment, but rather as means of repentance.*). This is how Habakkuk looked into the future's history. Because of the depravity of the righteous, God lifted up the Babylon and used Babylon as His striking rod. And Habakkuk presented the future direction, 'go since you (Israel) will be led away as captives.

Among the scholars the date may differ, but God gave the prophecy to Habakkuk 30 years prior. For Habakkuk, it was like being a doctor operating on a patient's stomach whom happens to see that cancer had spread throughout the body and had to close up the wound right away since the patient was untreatable. Habakkuk saw his nation's depravity and understood what God had desired. Thus he prayed, "Renew them in our day" (Hab. 3:2 NIV) and "God, judge us quickly," and waited for the destruction of his nation in peace. "Though there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will take joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab. 3:17-18 ESV)

(1.14) We need to pray that God would give us an authority to interpret histories, to have a perception for the future, and to present the history's direction by the time we finish this sermon series on the prophetic writing.

In any generation when the church was great, the direction of nation's politics, economics, social welfare, and culture was declared through the church. A time will come again when the word of God will regulate the politics, economy, society, and culture. It is important for Zoe Ministry and All Nations Church to prepare and build a framework of prophecy for that time.

I am an apostle, not a prophet. I prophesy since there is an office of a prophet in the spiritual system mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. A person becomes a prophet clearly by God's predestination, and not by training. A person becomes an apostle by God's predestination and training. But for a prophet, it is a choice from beginning to the end. God hand picks the person. The last prophets I have seen are Bob Jones and Paul Cain in the USA. A prophet is solely chosen by God to unconditionally obey Him in His work. A prophet lives like a mad man. Isaiah was told to live naked for 3 years, and he did so. Ezekiel was told to bake a cake with manure, and he did so.

(1.15) Whether there is a prophet or not is the key to the rise and fall of an individual

church or a nation. Thus, it is a very important matter. Upon Elisha's death, even a villainous king like Joash (NASB) said that Elisha was Israel's chariot and cavalry (2 Kings 13:14) because he knew that Elisha held the key to the rise and fall of Israel. So, a prophet is like an eye. If the eyes go dark, then the whole body becomes dark, and if the eyes are brightened, then the whole body becomes brightened. Therefore, there must be a prophet in a church.

In our church and Zoe Ministry, God's chosen prophets need to rise up. When I pray to God, the whole world is heading toward a time of darkness, a state of the calm before the storm, and apostles are rising up but not prophets. So, my desire is that prophets would rise up within Yulbang Church and Zoe Ministry.

When an apostle sees a prophet, the apostle knows whether the prophet is a true or a false prophet. And when a prophet sees an apostle, the prophet knows whether the apostle is a genuine or a fake. But a weird thing is that a prophet cannot move at all in the presence of an apostle. The reason is because the prophet moves only when the apostle speaks. Currently, there are many people prophesying, but there are not any whom God had predestined yet. There should be a real prophet because he is the eye.

Missionaries should move according to a spiritual strategy given by a prophet. As an apostle, I risk everything for the proclamation of the vision and the truth system. And when an apostle proclaim, prophets should come up with a strategic plan. For example, if we send a missionary team to Cambodia, then a prophet should strategize who and how many should be sent. This is a role of a prophet. This role is done by the prophetic intercessory prayer team in our church, but it should get better.

(1.16) An Old Testament scholar, Gerhard von Rad, stated that Israel is the only nation to understand the world history. When Arnold Toynbee did a research on the world history, he found that there were 14 civilizations that have risen on the face of the earth, but they all died out. But Israelites still exist even though they had a harsh history. The Jews consists of 70% of the United States' wealthy and 25% of the Nobel Peace Prize winners. The reason for this is because there is a prophet in their nation. If a nation understands the reason for its fall, then that nation will never fall again. The nation of Israel understood their reasons for their pain and suffering through a prophet. If you know the reasons for your life's failure, then you will never fail again. You can certainly rise again.

The Korean churches are still rebellious because there is not yet a prophet. Although there was a great revival in 1907, the churches did a foolish thing by committing idolatry of worshipping Japanese Emperor. The church has gone blind and wandered off the course because there was no prophet. God gave a big revival to churches, and they pompously thought they deserved it. They started to build their church buildings, have made their own kingdom, and have become arrogant. Even though the country was hit by IMF, the churches could not wake up. It is all because of churches' depravity. A nation will never fail when the history is interpreted with a clear understanding.

(b) A person who warns through an apocalypse

(1.17) An apocalypse, a revelation, is a spiritual burden. A revelation is not received from a person with a long beard and wearing a white robe. A person may get excited with delight when he receives a revelation, but for an apocalypse, it is a burden and a heavy load. When you pray for someone and feel their pain, you will be burdened. That is why an intercession is a burden. If you want to unload this burden, then you have to go to the person, pray together, and share the pain. Then, the burden is lightened and laid down. A spiritual revelation is a burden.

Revelation is used to save a person. When you receive a revelation and do nothing to save a person, then there is something wrong with the revelation. Revelations will become increasingly more accurate, and God will give you more revelations when you, with a spiritual burden, minister to save people. A doctor of oriental medicine can diagnose a patient's physical condition by taking the patient's pulse. Until the doctor can accurately diagnose the patient by taking pulse, he has to have many trials and errors on treatment and has to research on the patient to diagnose the problem. It is similar with a revelation. When a person receives a revelation, there is a spiritual burden. He, then, should resolve the burden and feel the burden again. And by repeating the cycle, the revelation will be more accurate.

(1.18) An eagle has a multi-vision, it can see 360 degrees. Just like an eagle, a prophet should see the history and present a direction. Regarding prophets, there are many areas which we still have yet to embody. Through this expository series, I desire that prophets will be raised and embodied.

The first thing we need to do today is to understand a prophet. We need to interpret the history, see the history's future, and suggest the history's direction. Proverbs 8 mentions that there is an authority in the church to move the wealth and kings. You will see that the churches in the 3rd world countries will move kings and presidents. This will be one of God's works through the church before the last days, a time of total darkness. That is why I am preaching the expositions on the Prophetic Writings before Revelations.

A prophet must be burdened of an apocalypse, which is a spiritual burden. He must have a burden to save souls and to proclaim that revelation. Through the church, God's will regarding politics, economics, social welfare, and culture need to be conveyed to the world.

Habakkuk's First Question

"How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?" (Hab. 1:2 NIV)

(1.19) Concerning his nation, Habakkuk prayed to God for a long time with a suffering heart. Habakkuk could not immediately put his prayer down because he had the prophet's spiritual burden. The reason I embrace and pray for the world, Korean nation and her people and church is because of the burden. Because I cannot lay down my burden, I cannot cease

to pray. I continue to pray.

“How long?” We need to pray for our nation and the people. Since Korean Christians are God’s chosen people in Republic of Korea, Koreans have to embrace Korea’s sins. And in that sense, Korean Christians are also sinners. As Daniel prayed in Daniel chapter 9, he embraced the sins of Israel regardless whether he was a sinner or not. You should also embrace the nation’s suffering and pray. As a pastor, I have to pray for this generation’s churches with a sense of responsibility. And as this generation’s Christians, you should pray with a sense of responsibility that you have not lived as a light.

Habakkuk earnestly prayed to save his perilous nation. He prayed, “They have become wicked and rebellious nation.” You should become a person with a big heart to embrace your country and nation. You should be able to embrace the world. You should have a spiritual burden to embrace dying souls in the world. This is a key to form a spirit of a prophet. You should not become an odious person who only cares about one’s family and self.

(1.20) “Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save?” (Hab. 1:2b NIV) Violence is a brute force. When someone was violent toward Habakkuk, he did not fight the person. He took the wickedness and the pain to God and vented. That was the greatness of Habakkuk. If I were to fight with a wicked person who harasses me, then my personal history will not be resolved. It will never be solved. The greatness of Christians is that the problem of evil can be resolved before God. When it is resolved by God, God shows these things and helps us to understand them. Then, we can give thanksgiving and praise. If I physically confront the person who harasses me, then there will be no resolve. We must express ourselves before God.

(1.21) The violence mentioned in today’s passage was toward Habakkuk’s nation. We must have a spiritual burden for our nation. Christians make up 20 percent of the population in South Korea. And Korean churches boast that the majority of the world’s biggest mega-churches exist in South Korea. From the bird’s eye view in Gimpo Airport, you can see numerous red crosses of churches throughout the land. But school violence is rife, and no one in prison believes that they are guilty of their crime. As a Christian, I should be burdened that the wicked is gaining power and influence.

I read in a newspaper article that 1 out of 6 Koreans have a mental illness. Korea is ranked top in world in most vices (consumption of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes). Love hotels are lined up around schools and residential areas. It is shameful for children to see them. Immorality is a serious problem, and greed is rampant. Although people attend church, money has become their God. We must lament for all these. I am not saying that I am righteous, but I lament with a spiritual burden.

We should lament, “God, how did this happen? Though we are chosen people and God’s churches are flooded throughout the land, why does evil gain power and influence in this nation’s affair? South Korea is ranked top among OECD in bribery and irregularities. The divorce rate is heading toward the top. What kind of nation is this? The immorality has

surpassed Japan, and greed is more serious than China. Father Archer Torrey has said that China is greed, Japan is immorality, and Korea is **division** (*Father Archer Torrey is referring to the country's main spiritual flow.*). But now, Korea has imported immorality from Japan and greed from China. What can be done about this nation?" If a person does not lament, it is because he is not living with God. He still thinks only about himself.

"Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds." (Hab. 1:3 NIV)

(1.22) In verse 3, "injustice" means to purposely commit wickedness. It is deliberately becoming wicked. If a person lives honestly in Korea, then he would not make much money. People deliberately evade taxes and commit unlawful transactions. At the time when I was in Los Angeles, I did not believe in Jesus. I saw that ninety percent of people (local Korean entrepreneurs) attended church, and yet they deliberately evaded taxes. And I said to them, "If you keep that up, you will be ruined. Even to an unbeliever like me, it seemed evil.

In the United States, insurance companies compensate based upon reported taxes. After the L.A. riot, Korean entrepreneurs did not receive proper compensations since they only reported a tenth of their profit. Bribery, irregularities, and corruption have risen to their zenith. People are knowingly committing wickedness. Even churches are financially supporting denominational elections. And those who fought and tried to keep their seat call themselves representatives of Korean churches. It really upsets me.

(1.23) "Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong?" "Wrong" means to decay and decompose. There is not an area where it is not decayed; politics, economics, society, and culture. In front of Yeondae University, there are more bars than bookstores. Nearby Ewha Women's University, women's apparel shops stand in a row.

(1.24) "Destruction and violence are before me." Korea no longer sees women as an object of beauty and love. Women are seen as an object of sex. The work of immorality is grave. "Destruction and violence:" These words mean same. When a word is repeated in Hebrew literature, it means that God's heart is being torn apart. And in the New Testament, Jesus said, "Truly, truly." It means that God's heart is worn out and it now has become ragged. "Destruction and violence," it has decayed and permeated. Israel has become a nation of no worth.

If a person lacking spirituality reads a newspaper, his heart becomes hardened. His heart becomes insensitive because he has seen much violence. Before, people trembled in their heart with small accidents, but now it takes tens of thousands of people getting killed to say that people got killed.

(1.25) There is strife and conflicts abounds. As it is written in Proverbs 28:2 (NIV), "When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers," people insist that they themselves are right. When three pastors gather, there are four denominations. Unification cannot take place.

How can there be unification when everyone says they are right. I would understand if there were no churches, but why are churches becoming so wicked even when there are so many pastors? Korea is ranked top on all the embarrassing areas. Korea is only place where you can feel immorality directly to your skin. We should go before God and say, "God, why is it like this?"

"Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted." (Hab. 1:4 NIV)

(1.26) "Therefore, the law is paralyzed," in verse 4 (NIV) means that there is no standard of living. People in prison say that they are in prison because they do not have any people who can back them up, connection, or money. "The law has is paralyzed." It means that there is no righteousness. We are to live by the law of Christ. Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them. (Matt. 5:17 NIV) The law should be kept perfectly if there are many Christians, but it is become more lax. Korea has become a country where you can be well off if you live dishonestly. The world is like a company that will burn tomorrow. If you are not foolish, you would not invest in the world.

(1.27) This was Habakkuk's resentment, "God, why is it like this? We are a chosen people. We are righteous people. Why is this nation like this when we believe in You? There are so many churches. Where there is news of corruption, church pastors are involved. How can be so?" Habakkuk's heart was decaying and decomposing. If there is a prophet in this nation, then he would beat his chest and cry out to God. The prophet should appeal, "God, answer me. This could be so if there are not any churches or pastors, but why is it so decayed?" Spiritual burdens like these caused Habakkuk to petition. There is resentment because he focused on God. Habakkuk expressed that he cannot live like this anymore and expressed his suffering. When Habakkuk prayed so, God finally answered Habakkuk's first question.

God's First Response (v. 5-11)

"Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. (Hab 1:5 NIV)

(1.28) A prayer is to ask once and listen. This is a prayer of a mature person. Majority of prayer ends as a monologue, "God, do this for me." That is how children pray. In Genesis 18:24, Abraham persuades God by asking "What if there are 50 righteous people?" Although we are just a creation, God calls us a friend when we mature. It is possible to debate and persuade God like Abraham since God said, "He (Abraham) is my friend." Like in Amos 3:7, we should talk with God without having any secrets. This is the spirit of a prophet. We should desire the prayer of asking once and listening once. We should not only speak and end it as a monologue. We have to listen to what God has to say.

(1.29) "Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed." (Hab. 1:5a NIV) When

Habakkuk petitions to God while embracing his nation's pain, God responded in a total irrelevance to Habakkuk's inquiry. God has said, "Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed." Why did God answer in such a manner? God answered in this manner because the people of Israel and Habakkuk had a biased view.

The people of Israel theologically perceived God as God of all nations and of the universe after their captive years. Here lies the greatness of the people of Israel. In any world's religions, there is not any religion that continues to worship of the deity without having blessings and peace. But the more Israelites' lives were being broken, the more they saw the greatness of God. After their views on God, as a patriarchal God, shattered, they gained a new perception of God. Israelites' view of God changed from a patriarchal God to God of Israel nation, from God of Israel nation to God of all nations, and from God of all nations to God of the universe.

As Israelites appealed for their wickedness, God said to them to look at the nations and be utterly amazed. This means that God was saying, "I am not only God to your nation. I govern over all nations of the world. Not only I am God to the righteous but have I also given same rain and sunshine to the wicked. I am God to the wicked as well. Not only I govern the heavenly angles, but I also govern over the demons. I am Almighty God." In one stroke, God shattered Habakkuk's and Israel's biased views and misconceptions of God. God continued to say that God will do something in Habakkuk's lifetime, but Habakkuk will not believe what God is going to do.

(1.30) It is explained in verse 6, "I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own." (NIV) The subject in verse 6 is God. It means that God has raised Chaldeans. God had just shocked Habakkuk. "How can God raise up people like Chaldeans?"

According to Arnold Toynbee, Chaldeans were the wickedest nation among his 26 researched nations. They would cut open a pregnant woman and take out the fetus. Then, they would have sporting games using the fetus. They would toss up the fetus in the air and points were awarded depending where the fetus was speared. It was same with Cambodian government. Who has raised Il-Sung Kim (North Korean dictator)? How can God raise up such an evil nation? Why did The Korean War occur? It also means that God used The Korean War. This is an important key to solve the problem of evil. If you wrestle with the problem of evil, then you would only receive wounds. "Why did bad things happen to me? Why did you give me emotional wounds?" The problem of evil cannot be solved by asking these questions. God had allowed wickedness so that He can call upon evil to be used in the evil days. It is amazing that God had raised up an evil nation. Therefore, God had foretold, "You would not believe." How can the righteous God call upon evil? It will be explained later, but God purified the righteous to become righteous by using evil. Babylonians (Chaldeans) were nothing more than a rod, a tool, to God. By using such an evil tool, God refined the righteous as righteous.

(1.31) Why did Gwang-Ju Massacre happen? God allowed Gwang-Ju Massacre to have Korean churches become churches and to use churches in Gwang-Ju. God allowed The Korean War because God had given great glory to Korean churches, but they participated in worshipping Japanese Emperor during the Japanese Colonial Era. If Korea is given material abundance by God when the Korean churches are in state of depravity, it is a sign that God has forsaken Korea. That is a curse, not a blessing. With prophet's eyes, you should be able to see this, and present Korea's direction of history that Korea has to pass through suffering. If God were to give a material abundance when Korean churches are depraved, then it is evident that God has forsaken Korea. We are not illegitimate children (of God).

God is going to make Korea as a missionary nation through the pure churches in the end times, and Korea must go through a time of suffering to be prepared to be used in the last days. Therefore, I prophesied few years ago. Korea cannot become a powerful nation by internal efforts alone. By external influences, Korea is going to fall headlong. But do not worry, Even though times may be dark, the righteous are prepare for God's time, but the suffering must be shared together. God prepares the righteous for His work.

We also need to have precise eyes to see the history. Why has IMF occurred in Korea? It is because of Korean churches' depravity, but they still have not collected their mind. As a saying goes, "A stich in time saves nine." We must wake up (spiritually) and pray.

(1.32) Right now, a spirit of Hinduism is uniting with Lama Buddhism. One hundred thirty thousand Islamic missionaries have come in to Korea and converted many Christians. Muslims are making a Islamic belt every 5km in Africa. In Europe, especially in England and France, it is no exaggeration to say that they have already become Islamic nations. Famous celebrities in America are establishing Lama Buddhist temples. Under the guise of ecumenicalism, Islam is mixing up with other religions along with materialism and is making a syncretistic religion. Catholicism is heading toward this direction as well, and other Protestant churches that could not keep the truth are also being influenced by the syncretism. Afterwards, Korean churches will become solely focused on materialism.

Korean churches must be awake and pray, preparing to firmly refuse Islamic advance when the time comes. True Christians need to influence Korean government in order to keep the churches holy. It is unknown how powerful of a nation Korea will become in the end times, but Korea needs play a role in the Casting Board to fulfill the duties of God's final mission ministry. But as of now, Korean churches have no other option than to choose suffering. Korean churches need to maintain purity by staking everything in the Word of God. A church that stakes everything in the Word of God and things of God will be capable to carryout God's great works.

(1.33)It was God who raised up Chaldeans. It meant that since Israel has become corrupt, God is going to make them righteous by using Babylon as a rod. God allowed suffering upon Israel to have Israel become a nation of purity in order to fulfill God's great calling. It

was an important realization for Israel.

Our lives will not be resolved when we curse upon the wicked, only pain and wound would remain. We first need to take the questions like these to God, "Why is that person afflicting me pain? Why does evil exist?" Then, we need to realize that God uses evil to make the wicked become righteous and the church to become a pure church. If we stand perfectly before God, then evil will not become problematic. Evil is not determined as a problem. We need to reflect upon ourselves when we see the wickedness and realize that evil exists because of my own wickedness. We need to be broad minded so that we can repent and forgive. Without doing this, we will only receive wounds. We will not be hurt if we realize that there are pain and suffering in our life because we are in a state which we have a problem of evil.

(1.34) When God commanded us to love our enemies, it means that there is no definition of enemy. It also means that the direction of the enemy is wrong. Our enemy is not men. In Ephesians 6, Apostle Paul stated that our fight is not against blood flesh. Our enemy is Satan. Therefore, our personal history will not be resolved if we focus on men and fight them. And when our personal history is not resolved, our national history will not be resolved. Furthermore, when our national history is not resolved, the world history will not be resolved. This is one of the reasons why evil exists. There is not a person whom we need to hate and should hate.

(a) The Definition of Evil (v. 7, 11)

1. Their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. (v. 7 ESV)

(1.35) Let's take a look at three aspects of wickedness. First is justice, and it is very important matter. How did Habakkuk open wide the Justification of Faith? It was because there was a clear definition of evil. The Chaldeans were dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity went forth from themselves (v. 7) and whose might was their god (v. 11). It means that they themselves were their own standard. That is evil. There are over 20,000 religions in the world, and all of them define good and evil by deeds. All the world religions define good and evil by deeds and a result of an action, but only the Hebrew nation does not. They define good and evil by the true nature of (a person's) existence, and the wicked are those who live to themselves. Why the pastor of Yulbang Church always says, "Die to yourself, deny yourself?" Here is the reason. "Their justice and dignity go forth from themselves" means that they themselves are their own standard of judgment. The wicked are those who set their own standard of judgment and those who live to themselves even though they may attend church. These are frightening words.

2. Whose might is their god (v. 11 ESV)

(1.36) The Bible states that desire of the flesh, self, and old self are the same. These are what Bible states as evil. Why does the Bible go to a great extent? Those who themselves

are their standards determine their situations by what benefits them the most. Therefore, if it is not beneficial to them, they consider it as evil. Friends and foes are determined by their "self." If a person is nice to me, then he is considered righteous, and if a person is bad to me, then he is considered as evil. Even though a person may be very nice to you, he may be evil. And even though a person may be very bad to you, he may be righteous. The standard to judge who is righteous and evil is not my "self." Our standards may be based upon what may benefit us. Here lies our conflict because this is opposite of God's Kingdom.

God's Kingdom is a kingdom of love. In that kingdom, you put others above yourself and serve others. If you cannot surrender your ideas, methods, experiences, and your possessions, then you cannot live as a person of God. It is so important to deny yourself. There is a calm flow through the Old and the New Testament that you should deny yourself and put to death your old self. The reason why God despised Amalekites was because they deified themselves.

(1.37) In Romans, there is an explanation of 3 S's, Satan, Secular, and Self. Satan uses the Secular as bait to tempt us daily. Thus, if I deny myself, then God will rule over me. And if I do not deny myself, then Satan will immediately intervene in my life. But if I am crucified to the cross, then it is God who intervenes. Therefore, the Bible's important truth hangs on whether am I going to live for myself or am I going to deny myself. If your "self" dies, then you will not be caught no matter how attractive the bait is. Furthermore, you will be completely dead to sin and law.

(1.38) In Galatians chapter 5, it is said that the "self" is the desire of the flesh. The struggle between the desire of the flesh and the desire of the Holy Spirit is fiercer than any other struggles. In Galatians 5:16, this struggle is described as a war. As long as the "self" is alive and well, the desire of the Holy Spirit cannot flourish inside of me. Reversely, if my new self flourishes due to the filling of the Holy Spirit, my old self cannot flourish as well. If a person's old self does not die, then he will get excited over building his own kingdom. The person has no relationship with God if he lives by his own ideas, methods, plans, and experiences even though he attends church. There is no relationship regardless of what the person may do or pray. As I said in the Lord's Prayer series, all prayers are deceptive if you pray a self-centered prayer and not God-centered prayer. You are just praying for your kingdom, righteousness, pride, and your stuff. Therefore, the definition of evil is a person who lives by his "self." Furthermore, it is a person whose justice and dignity go forth themselves and all standards of judgment is based on their "self." If you are living by your "self," then you are evil.

(1.39) As we live daily, we go back and forth from being wicked and good. I am not talking about salvation, but sanctification. In a day, there are some whose wickedness may be more powerful over their good by 50 to 0. Those who can (spiritually) battle are 20:10. There are those who have equal footing. And some are always victorious and get upset when they sometimes lose. There are many people who come and go between heaven and hell.

We absolutely cannot be influenced by evil. There are wicked people in church as well, they judge and define evil and good by themselves. This is where the struggle happens. The method of survival in the world is all alike. It all about me, me, me, my side, and your side. These are the history of the world. In politics, people play the connection game. They analyze all things by what benefits them the most. The scary thing is that it is same in the church. A church is no longer a church, but an organization.

I tend to reserve my judgment. I live on because God has given me an opportunity. If I cannot give opportunities to people, then who can? Two definitions of evil must be clear. Living by "self" needs to be broken and it needs to be put to death. We need to crucify it daily. We cannot separate over my side and your side.

(b) Form of Evil (v. 6, 8, 11)

1. Ruthless (v. 6, 8)

(1.40) What image does evil (or wicked men) reveal? It says in verse 6 that they are ruthless. First image of evil (or wickedness) is ruthlessness. According to 2 Timothy chapter 3, there will be times of difficulty in the last days. It means that in the last days, it will be heartless and ruthless. It seem like people in Korea are becoming more ruthless. They fight whether they are driving or parking. They are becoming more ruthless thinking that they will triumph if they raise their voices.

The distinction of God's people is gentleness. People should think of you as easy to deceive upon because you are lambs sent out among wolves. People should perceive you as an easy prey. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28 (NIV), "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart." We need to be gentle. Ruthlessness is not the image of God's people. There is no definition of enemy. Our fight is not with men.

(1.41) It says in verse 8 that they are fiercer than wolves at dusk. Wolves go hunting at night. In the last days, people will be fierce as they become evil. Lawlessness is vitalizing and love is fading away. Even in church, people are becoming fierce. Christians should appear to be gullible.

2. Impetuous (v. 11)

(1.42) "Then they sweep pass like the wind and go on." (Hab. 1:11 NIV) Another image of evil is that they are impetuous. Just as Daniel's prophesy that everything is speeding up, the wicked is impetuous. But God's work is always accomplished slowly in peace. God's work does not get accomplished by being hasty and pushy. As I have lived with God for the past 19 years, I have never failed by being late. I failed due to being hasty. If I am late, then God will take the lead. God becomes hasty when we don't work in God's timing. A symbol of evil is being impetuous. I am not in a situation where I can be idle and pray, but I wait on the Lord by praying.

3. Greed (v. 6)

(1.43) "... who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own." (Hab. 1:6 NIV) This is greed. Greed comes after jealousy. If you cannot be satisfied with God, then you are being influenced by evil. It is also written in Hab. 2:6, "... who piles up stolen goods."

4. Scoffing: Not acknowledging merits of others (v. 10)

(1.44) In verse 10, scoffing means not acknowledging merits of others. Christian's image is to share the pain with those who are hurting, mourn with those are mourning, and rejoice with those who are rejoicing. This is evidence of being good-hearted. It is evil to have a bellyache when your relative buys a piece of land. Christians should acknowledge the successes of others. God acknowledges your strong points.

An evil person will always try to demerit a person, but Christians are people who will lay down their life for others. Christians become happy when they see the happiness of others. Even Apostle Paul said that he tried his best to make others happy. A person, who is accustomed doing good deeds, will spontaneously help out others. We should not concern ourselves with how can we take things away from others or complain that God only blesses others and good things only happen to others. Instead, we should be thankful to God that He has blessed others. This mindset should be filled in us as joy, and we should be accustomed to act benevolently.

(c) The Purpose of the wicked (v. 9)

1. Violent: Destruction (v. 9)

(1.45) "They all come for violence..." (Hab. 1:9 ESV) The purpose of the wicked is destruction. Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and to destroy." The wicked destroys the work of God and the kingdom of God. Therefore, the wicked is destined to be ruined. The wicked may seem to appear nicely but they are ultimately to be destroyed. It is written in Psalm 73:2 (NIV), "But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold." The psalmist almost stumbled as he saw the success of the wicked. But in the end, it is the wicked that will be ruined. The wicked will be ruined, destroyed, and die. This is the purpose of the wicked.

2. Building Their Own Kingdom (v. 9)

(1.46) "Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand." (Hab. 1:9 NIV) The wicked establishes their people and kingdom. They become self-centered and gather people who are beneficial to them. I daily open up the Lord's Prayer and pray to God that I would not make my own kingdom and people. I repent and ask God to break up my nation and kingdom. I pray daily that God would make His people instead of me gathering mine.

Churches today have become organizations and gather their people. Church members are spiritually hurting, suffering, and lacking because churches are wearing the emblem of the wicked. Instead of filling up the church with God's life, pastors are ruling their congregation with their pastoral philosophy and ideas which cause the congregation to suffer. This is the methodology this generation's churches. We are all co-laborers because we are on God's side, not God is on my side. This is an important matter. The wicked will gather his people. The righteous want prosperity but they do not live a life of faith to benefit themselves or to gather their people.

Prayer

Today's message is very important. The Book of Habakkuk has influenced the Justification of Faith and Pauline Theology. Even today, we need to bow down to put to death our "self." We cannot judge others based upon how beneficial they will be to us. If they are beneficial to us, then they are good. If they are not beneficial, then they are wicked. We cannot judge like this. Church is not supposed to live consuming on the fruit of good and evil, but on the fruit of the tree of life. A person who lives by the life of God does not judge what is good and evil by their own standards. One must plea for his nation and people.

God, be merciful on our nation and people. Even though there are so many churches in our nation, evil is rampant. Grace us so that we may live by Your righteousness as our "self" become broken through the church. Let there be no image of evil among us. Let us not be ruthless, fierce, and scoffers. Help us not to gather our people. Totally break our kingdom and ideas. Let there be wisdom and authority upon Yulbang Church to interpret the history and to forecast the future and present a direction. God, raise up many prophets in Yulbang Church.

We need to have a spiritual burden for our nation and people. With a clear calling for the people and this generation, we need to live as a responsible Christians for our time. God, forgive us as we have not lived as light and perfectly. Would You build a prophetic framework in Yulbang Church through Habakkuk and work among us so that we would not lack anything as a glorious church to be used by You.

2 . HABAKKUK (2)

1 : 12 - 2 : 5

12.O LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die. O LORD, you have appointed them to execute judgment; O Rock, you have ordained them to punish.

13>Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

14.You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler.

15.The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad.

16.Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food.

17.Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?

1.I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.

2.Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.

3.For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

4."See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous will live by his faith -

5.indeed, wine betrays him; he is arrogant and never at rest. Because he is as greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples.

Introduction: Summary of the Previous Exposition

(2.1) God, why do you tolerate evil? This is the second session. The Book of Habakkuk is an invaluable book regarding some key points. First of all, the Book of Habakkuk is great because it has opened up the Justification of Faith, the righteousness of God, the revelation of salvation's principle in the New Testament. There is no mention of faith in the Old Testament. The Old Testament does mention about suffering and persecution, but only the Book of Habakkuk mentions salvation by faith.

The New Testament's Justification by Faith is revealed through the Book of Habakkuk. It is revealed through Romans 1: 17, 'who is righteous.' Galatians 3:11 emphasizes faith because the righteous are established by faith. And Hebrews 10:38 emphasizes Christian life since righteous live by faith. The Book of Habakkuk has opened up an amazing revelation which the righteous, faith, and life unites as one. It has turned Apostle Paul inside out.

(2.2) Secondly, other books in the Bible are ambiguous toward the problem of evil, but the Book of Habakkuk lucidly deals with it. There are about 26 definitions of evil, and Habakkuk accurately defines everything about evil, evil's existence, root, conclusion, form, definition, purpose, powers, and etc. Why does evil exist in a good world which God created? Evil exists because of the righteous. God also rules over evil. Instead of receiving wounds by evil and hating evil, we should acknowledge that evil exists because of us. This is the personal history. In a national history, why does evil exist? The problem lies with churches. The world history is suffering because God's people could not live by God's good principles and grace in a good world which God had created. Thus, if you digest Habakkuk well, the histories of personal, national, and world will be opened to you.

(2.3) According to Habakkuk's definition of a prophet, the prophet should be able to interpret the history, forecast the future, and present a direction. Through Habakkuk, with the biblical foundation in the background, we must clearly define prophecy. Prophesying must be done within that framework. Joel's prophecy zooms in the future events by looking at the present events.

(2.4) Habakkuk shows a maturing faith. Faith matures from resentment to understanding the problem of evil through a process of asking and receiving answers from God. In chapter 3, we can see that faith further matures from understanding to thankfulness and praise. In an understanding faith, we realize that evil exists because of the righteous. We should realize that the church is problematic, the church has become wicked, and the current world history is due to not living by God's grace. Then, we can become a big-hearted person who embrace the world and its people in our heart and pray.

(2.5) Today's passage is from Hab. 1:12 to 2:5. In our language, it does not seem like it ends at 2:5 but it does. Habakkuk asks his second question to God in 1:12 to 2:1, and God responds second time from 2:1 to 2:5. From verse 6 and on, it is not a part of God's second response; it is a song reflecting the hearts of the people. The people in verse 6 are the victims

whose lives have been trampled by the wicked. The strong and the rich of the world have trampled the people of grass roots. These people of grass roots have created a mocking poem as a proverb to mock the wicked. There is an old saying, “vox populi vox Dei (the voice of the people is the voice of God).” It does not mean that the public opinion is important, but God is interested in the poor and the insignificant. Five types of God’s amazing revelation will continue through the mocking poem of the people of grass roots next time.

1. Habakkuk’s Second Question (1:12-2:1)

“O LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die. O LORD, you have appointed them to execute judgment; O Rock, you have ordained them to punish.” (Hab. 1:12 NIV)

(2.6) “O LORD, are you not from everlasting?” The words ‘Holy One’ and ‘everlasting’ were spoken intentionally by Habakkuk, and his intention is revealed in verse 13. It does not mean that Habakkuk did not believe God is holy or from everlasting. Habakkuk purposely asked God if He is not the one who rules over history.

(2.7) “We will not die.” Habakkuk realized in his first question that we (Israelites) are Israelites. Because Israelites were wicked, God raised and used Chaldeans. Habakkuk began to understand God’s providence through his first question. God had judged ‘us’ (Israelites) to make us righteous through Chaldeans. But ‘we’ (Israelites) will not die eternally. Habakkuk realized that God judged the Israelites so that they would not die eternally. Once you entered into a deep conversation with God, your faith will mature. “You have appointed them to execute judgment.” Habakkuk understood that God judged the Israelites to make them good. His faith matured from resentment to understanding.

(2.8) “You have ordained them to punish.” Habakkuk’s eyes opened up to see the history. God had raised them (Chaldeans) to prevent the Israelite’s wickedness. As Habakkuk saw God raising up Chaldeans to discipline the Israelites, his gained an ability to interpret history. God elevated the wicked to prevent Israelite’s wickedness. The power to interpret history, suggest the direction of the future will be formed through Habakkuk. The personal, national, and world histories will be loosened. Habakkuk prophesied because God spoke. But in spite of it, Habakkuk could have seen the turn of events as he saw his nation’s flow.

(2.9) God has not abandoned Korea because He loves the Korean nation. If God gives materialistic blessings to churches in Korea in its current situation, then it means that God has abandoned Korea. But because God still loves Korean nation, He has not poured out material blessings even though Korean churches are in a state of corruption. God cannot use Korea as a casting vote to influence the world. Until next generation, until the church can perfectly, we will continue to move toward a time of suffering. Despite how much Korean nation will try, there will continue to be frustrated events by external influences instead of internal problems. Now is not the time that God will pour out material blessings to the cor-

rupted churches which are not acknowledged by God. The problem of evil is the problem of churches. IMF came (to Korea) because of the churches (in Korea), but the churches did not learn a lesson from it. After coming out of IMF, Korean churches are making an irrelevant remark.

(2.10) All evil that exist in this world are not abundant because there is existing evil. For example, because there is Iraq, other (forms of) evils are not abundant in this world. Evil men and evil nations were created to be used by God. It is God's method to use evil to prevent evil. When ideas of men escalate as rebellious thoughts against God, there was war. For example, after the ideas of Age of Enlightenment or liberalism, there was war. After this, there will be a time when people humbly seek God. Habakkuk's eyes were opened to see the history, God had raised up Chaldeans to prevent evil. It opened through asking and realizing once. When discerning eye of Habakkuk opens up, eyes to see the history will be opened to you, and you will be able to see history.

(2.11) Personally, I believe that you go through suffering so that you may not become more wicked. It is God's grace and consideration. Thus, we may become humble and realize God's providence when we face suffering. Instead of receiving wounds because of evil, we ought to embrace it. Instead of calling someone who hurts me, 'evil,' we ought to open our eyes to see ourselves. This is God's providence which moves the personal, national, and world histories. Ultimately, it is an opportunity to take a look at ourselves when someone becomes a thorn in my flesh. And it is no longer a problem when I change after taking a look at myself.

"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?" (Hab. 1:13 NIV)

(2.12) Habakkuk, in order to say what is in verse 13, raved in verse 12. "If God is holy and pure, then why does God discipline through the wicked?" Habakkuk did not know the definition of the righteous and the wicked. The word, "wrong," means that it is totally decayed. The word, "treacherous," signify the unbelievers, the Chaldeans. We need to carefully observe the contradiction that the Chaldeans are the wicked and the Israelites are the righteous. In chapter 1 verse 2, Habakkuk painfully prayed for the wickedness of his nation, "God, why is this nation so wicked?" But Habakkuk now suggests that Israel is righteous. Habakkuk contradicted himself out of jingoism. Habakkuk's contradiction in jingoism and nationalism is your contradiction. We say, "He has sinned 10 times and I have sinned 9 times. Therefore, he is wicked and I am righteous." Are the wicked and the righteous classified this manner? This is the worldly standard.

(2.13) Habakkuk petitioned with the standard of the world. It is same with us. "Why do not my children prosper when I dedicated myself to God?" "Why am I financially broke when I try to live by faith?" These are your petitions. These petitions are based on deeds,

and you have fallen into its contradiction. "I am dedicated to God, but why....?" This is a legalistic faith which self contradicts itself based on worldly standards. If you distinguish it this way, then there are so many people who were cursed in the Bible. Hosea was holy and pure before God, but God gave him a prostitute as a wife. How cursed was he? It is true that it is God's original plan for us to prosper in our faithful living. But the process is not so. It is more beautiful to God when we live by subliming with godly things in midst of evil and suffering by God's grace and impressions. Why can't we acknowledge this? It is because of the worldly standards.

(2.14) "North Korean Christians are cursed. Why does not God unify two Koreas quicker?" This is the perspective of mammonistic South Korean churches on North Korean Christians. Is it a blessing to have a worship service in a church that can house tens of thousands and has an orchestra performing? Is it a curse to have an underground worship service holding your breath and live a faithful life desiring God? Who loves God more?

The unification cannot occur while the churches in South Korea are depraved. The South can pollute the purity of the North Korean churches. Actually, this is the very reason why God has been delaying the unification. Many people think that happiness is having a full stomach, and they desire to feed the North Korea. But this is mammonistic churches' point of view. Even though life may be painful and difficult, it is a greater blessing to appear in glory when God's kingdom appears by living a life in God's amazing grace. A church that gathers tens of thousands and has an orchestra as an entertainment is not a blessing.

(2.15) A true work of God is done in midst of suffering, pain, and trial. Fulfilling God's righteousness in a circumstance where everyone may say it is a curse to be in is genuine. Even though we may have a spirit of a common people whom are in pain and crushed, God desires for us to live for God's righteousness and fulfill God's righteousness. If this is the case, then you do not need to possess something. You do not have to become somebody. We need to give up world's righteousness and standards. The Gospel is not based upon them. A true work of God is to fulfill God's righteousness in midst of suffering and pain. Joseph never once resented God in his unfavorable circumstances. This is what God desires from us.

(2.16) God's measure is different for everyone. To be God's people is to know this measure, to know God's providence and plans. Some people can have an amazing fellowship with God in midst of suffering. I cannot say that I am more righteous because I have sinned six times and you have sinned seven times. I cannot say I more righteous than others just by how I serve God. It is different for everyone. When I acknowledge God's plan for each people, I do not fall into a contradiction of history. I cannot say, "He is like that, then why am I like this?" and compare myself to him. I am me. What is important is that God's glory is upon me. What does it have to do with me when God's glory is upon someone else?

(2.17) Because God has poured out all His love to me in midst of suffering, God loves me whether I am suffering, doing well, not doing well, abundant, unknown, or famous. The

glory of God which is upon me does not change. If you pull the love of God which is in you, there is nothing to contradict in the world. Job's wife told Job to curse God and die. In Job's wife point of view, Job's circumstance is a contradiction, but it is not for Job. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." (Job 1:21 NIV) There is no contradiction if you accept the measure God has given you. But there will be a contradiction if each of us does not receive God's glory.

(2.18) Humanistic world says that everyone is equal. This is the strategy of Satan. The world is not impartial. Each person is precious and different, not equal. You cannot trade a person with anyone else. You need to realize this to not be miserable in the contradiction of history. There is no significance whether another person has a lot or little. It is ludicrous when a righteous person sees the wicked prosper. When a person does not devote himself to God's will or obey according to God's plan and become prosperous, it is not an envious matter. Instead, it is a pity seeing people like him. There is no reason to envy.

(2.19) From verse 14 to 17, Habakkuk becomes miserable and resents about the wicked because he cannot resolve the contradiction of history. When a person becomes miserable of himself, there is no significance of believing in Jesus. The person will say something like, "There is no significance even though I believe in Jesus. God is not listening to my prayers. There is no difference whether I believe in God or not." Are these statements true? No, they are not.

You must disregard worldly standards, otherwise, you cannot live by grace. God will give you all things if you will not be ruined by them. In Exodus, Israelites wanted to eat meat. So, God gave them meat, 16 kilometers in radius and 1 meter high. You should not underestimate God's power. If people were to live by God's grace, their lives would be filled with abundance more and more. But if people were to live by their self-righteousness, their lives would ultimately be filled with emptiness. In the worst case, they can become like Hemingway who committed suicide with a shotgun in his grand mansion. A person can end his own life while thinking, "Why have I lived like this?" This is a special trait of a person who has lived by his self-righteousness and the worldly standards. It is because he could not resolve the contradiction of history. The Creator God loves us even though we are not worth a snap in the universe. If you enter into God's grace, then you will be interested and take preciously in trifle and little things. If you live by the worldly standards, then you will become miserable.

"You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler." (Hab. 1:14 NIV)

(2.20) Habakkuk saw the image of those who have much trample on those who have little as fish in the sea and sea creatures. It can be seen as the strong tormenting the weak in this world. But Habakkuk questioned his worth of existing. He questioned whether he was like the fish in the sea and a sea creature. Habakkuk questioned it because his eyes were set

on his own standards, his "self." When David saw gigantic Goliath, he said, "You are my prey." But when the Israelites could not see through God's eyes, they said that they were like locusts.

Why did the psalmist miss his footing in Psalm 13? It is because he, in worldly standards, envied the prosperity of the wicked and their possessions. We need to pity the wicked who has much. Not living according to God's will and living by what God did not give is a curse. It is a pity. You need to have this perspective. When Naaman brought many gifts to Elisha, Elisha did not take any. This is a characteristic of God's people. The world seems like insignificant. This is not a great spirituality but basic. The reason why this is difficult to do is because we have lived legalistically and not have chosen the life of grace.

"The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad." (Hab. 1:15 NIV)

3 . HABAKKUK (3)

2 : 6 - 20

6."Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying, " 'Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! How long must this go on?'

7.Will not your debtors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make you tremble? Then you will become their victim.

8.Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left will plunder you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

9."Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!

10.You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.

11.The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.

12."Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by crime!

13.Has not the LORD Almighty determined that the people's labor is only fuel for the fire, that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?

14.For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

15."Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies.

16.You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed ! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory.

17.The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your destruction of animals will terrify you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

18."Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak.

19.Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!' Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it.

20.But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

The Principle of Sowing and Harvesting – Five Desires of the Wicked

(1.14) Let's take a look at five desires of the wicked that sows and harvests. There is a "woe" in verse 6. It mentions the desire for possession. In verse 9, the woe of the desire for security. In verse 12, the woe of the desire for accomplishment, self-realization. In verse 15, the woe of the desire for honor, power/ authority. In verse 19, the woe of the desire for idol worship/ greed. We need to extract these five heads of a snake and trample upon it. In a state where the Holy Spirit does not rule, these five heads of a snake will manifest. We should live a life which the Holy Spirit rules. But, when we do not live that kind of life, this symbol of the wicked will manifest.

1. The Desire for Possession (v. 6-8)

"Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying, 'Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! How long must this go on?'" (Hab 2:6 NIV)

(1.15) The word, "them," refers to grass root Israelites whom have been sacrificed by the wicked for their desires for possession. These people have stated God's revelation through a satirical poem. The reason why God did not directly spoke to Habakkuk was that the people could have seen the self-evident bridle of the world's wickedness through the satirical poem. We need to extract the desires of the wicked and trample upon it. We also need to apply it on ourselves. We cannot displace it upon the person next to us or our spouse.

(1.16) "... piles up stolen goods... How long must this go on?" What problem is there when you acquire things honestly? Acquiring "stolen goods" means to acquire things that God has not given. Life is not tough because you lack money. It is tough because you try to acquire things that God has not given to you. Life becomes tough because you try to acquire the amount that you desire.

Besides food and clothing, there are not many things you need. It is written in Proverbs 30:8, "Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread." (NIV) This is what means to live by what God gives. It becomes difficult when you try to attain things which God has not given.

The characteristic of the wicked is to make all nations their possession; otherwise, he will not be satisfied. He needs to possess it in his pockets. He will become insecure when he cannot possess it. And he will commit sin because of the insecurity and greed that comes from unable to possess it. Living without the confidence that God will provide is legalism.

(1.17) A life of grace is a total freedom, and a total freedom is a life of a total enjoyment. God can provide whatever I need and which brings Him joy. Since we don't have faith like that, we are caught by the insecurity of possessing it on our own. For Priscilla and Aquila, when Romans took everything from them, they did God's work in Corinth while making tents

with Paul. Despite having money or not, we should devote ourselves to God. It is same with being healthy or ill.

It is a blessing to live by what God provides in all circumstances. It is same with the ministry. The pastor should have passion to nurture every church member to become God's person. But even being unable to nurture a single soul, the pastor asks for a bigger congregation, a thousand, ten thousands, or a hundred thousand members. Thus, the pastor leads hell bound church members. The pastor creates an uninfluential mega church that people look down upon.

Due to the desire of possession, we try to possess by force since God has not given it to us. We tend to think it is natural to possess more. Why are we green with envy of what others possess? It is because we think we lack it. We need to get rid of the desire of possession. We need to completely extract it out of us.

(1.18) God clearly defined two distinct warnings. One is to acknowledge God's sovereignty and the other is to acknowledge neighbor's rights. The child psychologist, James Dicks, stated that if you leave a child in on an open field, the child will not go anywhere. But if you leave a child in a city, the child will travel 3 kilometers in an hour due to sense of security. We will mature when we break our limitations and boundaries to live by grace. Thus, a believer who lives by grace is a mature believer. Otherwise, we would have to make space to live by the laws of the basic principles of the world. The Ten Commandments are easy for us. There is none who would worry about murdering. Nevertheless, we were given the Ten Commandments as warning because we are like little children. It means to acknowledge God's sovereignty and honor and the authority of parents and your neighbors. To obtain what is not yours is not the image of people of God.

(1.19) **"Who piles up stolen goods..."** Because the wicked has taken what is not his, it becomes a burden. "And to him who adds to himself the weight of goods taken in pledge. (CJB)" It is the principle of sowing and reaping. He took what he desired and it became a load. I saw people who won the Lotto and messed up their life. Their life changed as they became criminals and drug addicts. Just look at the children of mega corporate executives who conned a lot of people. Look at the last days of the children of dictators. These corrupt executives, dictators, and their children are burdened because of what they have taken, and it is now a burden to them.

Albert E. Winship's book, *Jukes-Edwards: A study in Education and Heredity*, compares the descendants of Pastor Jonathan Edwards and Max Jukes, an atheist who lived nearby Edwards. The descendants of Edwards consist of a pastor, a missionary, a president of a university, a professor, a vice president, a senate, a governor, and etc. None of the descendant of Edwards caused harm to the society or became a burden. On the other hand, the descendants of Jukes consist of a murderer, a drunkard, a prostitute, and criminals. The descendants of Jukes caused much harm to the society. If you take it by force when God has not allowed it

to you, it becomes a load. This is the principle of history. You must not possess unrighteous things. If you do, it will become a load.

“Will not your debtors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make you tremble? Then you will become their victim.” (Hab. 2:7 NIV)

(1.20) In verse 7, the wicked thought what they have taken belonged to them, but there will be someone who will come to take it away from them. This is the principle of history. Babylon nation thought it would last for eternity, but Persia rose up after. The Persians thought their rule was eternal, but Hellenistic civilization rose up after. All of the history of the great civilizations disappeared from the earth without a trace. It is because they all took it by force. It is same in life. Happiness cannot be gained by taking things which God is not pleased of. There may be a short joy of possessing things, but surely it will be taken away. The oppressors, persecutors, and pillagers will rise up. This is the flow of history.

It is written in Proverbs 28:1, “The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.” (NIV) The wicked will fear the judgment that unrighteous possession will be taken away someday. The righteous has nothing to be afraid of because there is nothing to be taken away. There is no fear when you live by the One who provides rather than by provided things.

“Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left will plunder you. For you have shed man’s blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.” (Hab. 2:8 NIV)

(1.21) This wicked will believe that they have completely taken everything by plundering, but God will set aside those He will judge. The remnant is very important. In the last days, God will work through the remnant. The remnants are the spiritual Nazarenes from the Book of Numbers. In the last days, God will receive His glory through the remnants. Our ministry is the ministry of the remnants. We are gathered here for the glory of God. This is the spiritual pilgrimage. We need to pull out our hidden desire to possess. We get ruined because of the money and people that God had not given. God will give abundantly when we will not be ruined by the things given. We need to fill our lives with what God has given.

2. The Desire for Security (v. 6-8)

“Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!” (Hab. 2:9 NIV)

(1.22) Because you obtained it by the desire to possess, you try to keep it. The righteous, like Job, does not need to go through the suffering, because it is God who gives and takes it away. But we try to keep it in our possession because it is not ours; we have taken it away from someone else. God’s people did not survive because of the Nile River, but they need to live by the early and the late rain that are given by God. Even though there is a drought, and the land is parched dry, all you need is the promise from God that it will rain

tomorrow to live.

If you have been living by the things you possess and made, then at the thought of losing them will cause you to be insecure and not let them go. If it is for God, then we ought to surrender our possessions, regardless of what it may be. The people and money that you think belongs to you will ultimately ruin you.

(1.23) **“Set his nest on high...”** In order to continue to keep what is not ours, we try to go to the higher grounds. But who is our rock and the fortress? Only the Lord is our Rock and the Fortress. Because we try to build an impregnable fortress with our possessions, we try to build walls on a higher ground. When we are on a higher ground, we tend to become prideful. The reason to live on a higher ground is to keep our possessions.

“You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.” (Hab. 2:10 NIV)

(1.24) The wicked thought that by holding on to their possessions, life would be more joyful. But it actually causes tragedy. Those of you have secret fund, listen. You should spend money for God’s glory rather than to save it for your children as an inheritance. **“... shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.”** Trying to keep what is not yours is sin, and it shames you.

“The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.” (Hab. 2:11 NIV)

(1.25) A wall is a boundary to protect one’s house. The meaning of “stones of the wall will cry out” is that the wall is harmful to the owner. God is supposed to be my wall, but men, whom God has not given, have become my wall and enemy. The beams are closer than the wall. They are inside the house. This means that the enemy is inside the house, and the interior is decaying. Most of the fall of a nation is caused by an internal problem.

Rarely, a nation falls by an outside invasion. In the Roman Empire, 14 out of 16 emperors died of assassinations. The late Korean President Park, Jeong-Hee had 26 relatives as bodyguards, but he was assassinated by someone inside. The late American President Nixon was betrayed by a reporter whom he trusted. The closest person to us is ourselves. If our “selves” does not die, then we will be ruined by it. If our “selves” dies, then we have no wall and beams. Otherwise, anyone and anything can become our wall and beams.

(1.26) Also in marriage, because there is God, my wife is a spouse whom God has given to me. She is not a person for me to possess. My children, too, are not to be possessed. They are gifts whom God has given. Since my “self” has died, there is no “my people” and no one to betray me. They are not “my people,” but God’s people. Even though they may betray me, I will not get hurt because they are God’s people.

We suffer because we try to possess our spouses, children, and inheritance. The characteristic of the wicked is to possess people and things. This is the reason why they will

perish. If we do not die to our “selves,” then the “wall and beams” will be made. Even now, as I pledge myself to God, I pray that God will not allow me to make my own nation, people, and kingdom. The nations fall because the interior has been rotted. It is most difficult when church’s interior begin to rot. This is why we need to establish churches by God’s grace.

3. The Desire for Accomplishment (v. 12-14)

“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by crime!” (Hab. 2:12 NIV)

(1.27) “Builds.” To build is the greed to accomplish and a reality of one’s ego. A. H. Maslow stated that the greed to accomplish is the top desire among the five fundamental desires. There are many people who believe in God but uses God as means in order to fulfill their desires. God is not their objective but a method to fulfill their ego. Instead of waiting on God, they wait for money. They justify their desires. They use God as means to solve their problems. Fulfilling desires through God’s method, with tears and prayers, is not a problem, but it is not a just way. It is accomplished by an unjust way, through “bloodshed,” sacrificing others, and “crime.” It is written in 1 Timothy 3:18 that deacons are not to pursue dishonest gain. It may seem like it is a blessing to make money dishonestly, but it is not. We should not earn money while sacrificing others.

“Has not the LORD Almighty determined that the people’s labor is only fuel for the fire, that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?” (Hab. 2:13 NIV)

(1.28) “Exhaust for nothing” signify that what was sowed was reaped. It will become ruined overnight. If there is a company heading for bankruptcy, no one will invest in it. The nations are like companies that will be burned away. We should not invest in the trifling world. Believers should not put their life on something that is not eternal. It is God’s will that the wicked would become futile.

In Habakkuk 3:2, Habakkuk is shocked that the vigorous Babylon, which conquered two-thirds of the world, will fall. **“... in wrath remember mercy.” (Hab. 3:2)** Upon understanding the flow of the history, once resentful Habakkuk prayed for and embraced the wicked. As we see the flow of history in our own personal history, we can be merciful upon people whom we once hated. We take pity on worldly people whom invest on temporal things. Before, we would be envious of what the wicked possessed, but now we take pity on them because their possessions would become a measure for their judgment. If the righteous do not live a life of righteous and live a life of wicked, then life will become tough. We need to remember that the wicked will be contradicted in sowing and reaping.

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14 NIV)

(1.29) Only things that acknowledge God is eternal. We need to repeatedly invest

on eternal things. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal." But we have to seek God's kingdom and His righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) Jim Elliot said, "He's no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." This is the most glorious life.

4. The Desire for Honor – Desire for Power (v. 15-17)

"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies." (Hab. 2:15 NIV)

(1.30) "...who gives drink to his neighbors," In order to attain fame and power, the wicked will give drink to his neighbor and make a fool out of him. "...till they are drunk," Getting others to be drunk is the goal of the wicked. He makes a fool out of others so that they will reveal their nakedness. Revealing their nakedness means to expose their weakness. To make a fool out of a person and to exploit their weakness is a characteristic of the wicked. Unfortunately, this happens also in churches.

Church should precisely teach the truth of God's word so that the congregation would clearly know God's will and live accordingly. But the congregation was made a fool that they could not see the corruption of the pastor. To maintain the vitality of their nation is the goal of a church in this generation. Using folly policy is the same in the church or in the world. The wicked makes a fool out of people and oppresses them by exploiting their weakness.

(1.31) Among the folly policy, there is a policy that the dictators use. It is 3 S's (Screen, Sport, Sex). Screen is movies, TV, and commercials. We should not trust it. The commercials deceive viewers. It deceives a person to think that by using this makeup will make her become beautiful. TV is a dummy-box. If a family is drawn to TV, then the conversation in the family will cease. The world, via movies and screens, will make a fool of a person through commercials. Sports will cause an enmity toward a stranger. When cheering for your own team, you cannot cheer for them in the opponent's section. Next is sex. It is an adult entertainment business. Even though there are numerous love-hotels, there are not any vacant rooms. The wicked collects taxes through the adult entertainment businesses in each city.

"You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory." (Hab. 2:16 NIV)

(1.32) The wicked tried to maintain their power by making fool of others and exploiting their weaknesses, but this has become his own weakness. Talking about other's weaknesses is a sign of the wicked. A characteristic of the wicked is to sound like he is perfect. We should know how to reveal our weaknesses and flaws. We did not become righteous by ourselves, but God has given us justification. What the Lord has forgiven is no longer a weakness. But if we do not try to reveal our weakness, it means that we still did not receive God's

grace of forgiveness. We feel it as guilt. We are not transparent. We need to reveal our flaws regularly. There is nothing that we can't reveal.

(1.33) When I looked at my family history, I repented. In my family history, there are deception, division, slander, immorality, and greed for possession. What my ancestors sowed and reaped descended through the generations to me. What the wicked sows, it will affect 10,000 generations. I repented for my family's sins, you should do it too. We should not sow wickedness.

(1.34) In the book of Job, God rebukes Job's three friends. God was enraged because they applied the principle of sowing and reaping as a result of Job's sin for the suffering he was going through. God was also enraged against Job because Job said that he is righteous and sowed righteousness. In chapter 39 of Job, God asked Job, "Who created the land?" Despite being a righteous, if there was not a land, then Job could have sowed. Job was righteous not because he sowed righteous, but he lived by grace. Job realized of this in chapter 42 and confessed, "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you." (Job 42:5 NIV) Once realizing the principle of grace, Job was able to see God.

We are to live by the principle of grace and not the principle of sowing and reaping. If we do not live by the principle of grace, then we naturally sow nothing but wickedness. What we think, what we say, and everything else is wicked, so if we cannot live on without grace.

"... **be exposed!**" This means that the wicked is caught in his weakness. The cup from the Lord's right hand is the cup of judgment. "... **is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory.**" The personal history, national history, and the world history operate by the principle of sowing and reaping. Other than sowing grace, we have nothing to sow.

"The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your destruction of animals will terrify you. For you have shed man's blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them." (Hab. 2:17 NIV)

(1.35) To the wicked, God will even judge their mistreatment of animals. God will judge what the wicked have sown from the beginning to the end. The righteous will be forgiven by the grace of God at the judgment, but God will reckon the life of the wicked. God will judge based upon what they have sowed. We have to be like Job, without fault.

We need to sincerely repent if we lived our life by the principle of sowing and reaping instead of grace. Immorality and the desire for possession, they are all in me. The root is deep, and we need to cut it off.

5. The Desire of Idol Worship (v. 18-20)

"Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that

teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak.” (Hab. 2:18 NIV)

(1.36) There is no benefit in idol worshiping. Idol worship is a deification of self. I make an idol of what I desire to worship myself. But due to my greed, I ruin myself. Science and computer, which were made by self-deification, will ruin mankind. Ultimately, idol worship will ruin the person. **“Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies?”** In a nation where there is a lot of idol worship, there is a lot of fib.

“Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’ Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’ Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it.” (Hab. 2:19 NIV)

(1.37) **“... lifeless”** Idol worship is not beneficial and lifeless. There is nothing eternal other than what God has made and planted. Only God is eternal and has life.

“But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.” (Hab. 2:20 NIV)

(1.38) Solely worshiping God is beneficial.

(1.39) We need to pull out the five desires of the wicked. Greed for possession; we don't know how strong the desire is to live by things that God has not given. We need to live by what God has given and by grace. The world states that the desire for possession is instinct. But, when God created us, there was no such a thing. All mankind, who has been corrupted by sin, lives by this.

Desire for security; we try to keep what is ours. This is living by the Nile River. Our identity will surely be corrupted.

Desire for Accomplishment, self-realization; it is not accomplished honestly. But it is accomplished by blood and unrighteousness. All that was made will be ruined.

Desire for honor, power; we make fools out of others to maintain our honor. In order to survive, we have to kill others. This is the world of mankind. It is characterized by living by the life of beasts. If we are to look at other's weaknesses, it means that we have a symbol of the wicked. We have to look at other's strengths. If we compare and criticize, we are being legalistic.

Desire for idol worship; it is greed of one's self. We have to live solely by grace.

4 . HABAKKUK (4)

3 : 1 - 19

- 1.A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On shigionoth .
- 2.LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.
- 3.God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth.
- 4.His splendor was like the sunrise; rays flashed from his hand, where his power was hidden.
- 5.Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps.
- 6.He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal.
- 7.I saw the tents of Cushan in distress, the dwellings of Midian in anguish.
- 8.Were you angry with the rivers, O LORD ? Was your wrath against the streams? Did you rage against the sea when you rode with your horses and your victorious chariots?
- 9.You uncovered your bow, you called for many arrows. Selah You split the earth with rivers;
- 10.the mountains saw you and writhed. Torrents of water swept by; the deep roared and lifted its waves on high.
- 11.Sun and moon stood still in the heavens at the glint of your flying arrows, at the lightning of your flashing spear.
- 12.In wrath you strode through the earth and in anger you threshed the nations.
- 13.You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. Selah
- 14.With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us, gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding.
- 15.You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters.
- 16.I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us.
- 17.Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,
- 18.yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.
- 19.The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

Introduction

{4.1} What does God do as he moves this world? What is His purpose? Yul-Bang Community can exist as the righteous only if every member, without exception, depends his or her life on the word of God and wills to give up anything for God. There are several blessings that manifest in a Christian, such as the joy and excitement of believing in Jesus, but my personal best is that it has opened my eyes to see history. Why is this a benefit? You might say that I am not even a history teacher, but a living fish swims up against the current. Fortunetellers speak about predestined destiny and predestined fortune. Predestined fortune is like a flying stone coming from the front. Since it comes from the front, we can avoid it if we open our eyes and live rightly. Therefore, predestined fortune according to the people of this world can be adjusted by the accumulation of goodness. However, predestined destiny is like a flying stone coming from the back. Since it comes from the back, it can't be avoided even with our eyes wide open. This is what they say. The author of "The Crown of Satan," who used to be a leader of Shaman, said that he was supposed to have a predestined destiny of a premature death, but he didn't die. So they say that he was actually filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a person filled with the Holy Spirit can change his or her predestined destiny. Why do I think that this is possible? It is because in the book of Revelation, the animal has eyes all around. Christians also have these eyes all around. That is why it is important to have the eyes to see history. People of the world say that they live because they were born. Realizing history is to know that I am under the God's control, the Ruler of national history, world history and personal history, and this fact gives us great peace.

{4.2} The reason why people are afraid is because they wander around not knowing where to go. The water is still at the top of Niagara Falls, but the sign warns to stay away. You hear this warning to stay away when things are still. Thus, if we can discern what to decide and where to go in a bigger, chronological situation and not just in a temporal environment or circumstance, we will never be afraid of anything. This is the unique authority and power of the Church of God. Usually when Shamans die, they tend to tell their children to believe in a great spirit. This Great Spirit refers to Jesus, and Christians have this power to change predestined fortune and predestined destiny. This is something very great and prideful. God can totally change one's whole life. This is the excitement of living with the Creator.

{4.3} When Habakkuk realized God's providence, peace came along. That is how peace can be experienced in the midst of intense suffering. In 1 Kings 18, Elijah stands calm at Mt. Horeb even as a great wind blows and an earthquake breaks out, and as a raging fire consumes the whole mountain. Therefore, God's voice was heard to him when he had kept his peace. But God's voice can't be heard when we depend our lives on our circumstances and conditions. Even worldly people sing when their stomachs are full and they are at peace. Prosperity develops human civilization. As peace brings singing, a song is sung when God's peace is manifested. "Upon Shigionoth" in Chapter 3 signifies a song with a fast beat. Now a great suffering is on the way, but still a song is sung because God's peace is manifested.

Certainly a song may be sung due to a passion and an urgency for God's judgment, yet there is gladness. Joy comes along when our eyes are opened to see God's plan, providence, and history. This is Psalms. Psalms must be covered verse by verse with expository preaching.

Introduction

{4.4} In Chapter 1, they the chosen people lamented because of their own wickedness. The problem with the wicked harassing the righteous concerns the righteous and not the wicked. The problem of a wife annoying a husband concerns the husband and not the wife. Why do pastors become so depraved, and why does this nation get corrupted? The leaders of this nation must become leaders who understand the pain of the poor, and Christians must not hurt others.

{4.5} The answer from God is heard. Chaldean are raised to purify your people, and the definition of the wicked is neither the Chaldean nor Israel, but it refers to the people who live with their own power and set the standard of judgment as themselves. These words are very frightening. The self must not be alive. According to the Bible, the self is killed with Jesus Christ on the cross. In order to become righteous, we must be killed with Jesus. If "I" am alive, one can never become righteous. A person living by the ways of his or her self is evil because that person would interpret things according to his or her advantages. The life of a righteous person must be able to accept loss for others. We must live a life like that of Foolish Ivan by Tolstoy, which is permitting everything to be taken away. Isaac told people to take the wells as they tried to snatch them when Isaac finished digging. I also try to live this way. I try to live to accept loss for others. Do not say you can't do it when you didn't even try. It is because the stereotypes and standards of this world are embedded in you. Although we might attend a church, we are still a representation of the wicked as long as we have the five kinds of desire. Well, we know the world is like that, but some churches encourage placing the snakes' heads even more desireily. Living by the ways of oneself must be repented thoroughly. The desire of possession, the desire of comfort, the desire of achievement, the desire of power and the desire of idolatry are not the instinct of a human being, but it is the instinct of the wicked.

{4.6} God defines the wicked. Why does evil stain this glorious world that God has created? It is not because there is a good god and an evil god, but it is because the righteous don't live like the righteous. Here is the contradiction with personal, national, and world history. Too many people live arrogantly with stiff necks, not knowing their crudeness and immorality. Those snakes must be extracted and boiled. A wicked person is creepy, wild, and quick. Also, the leadership of the Korean churches does things quickly and even the foreigners know this "Korean quickness" very well. Moving ahead of God out of hurry is evil.

A wicked person is quick because his or her purpose always concerns himself or herself. But the righteous wait upon God, since their purpose is God himself. We might be slow, but no matter how fast the wicked are, they are still in God's hand. We shouldn't rush or move according to our purpose, and we shouldn't become hardened or become scary and rough.

Upon hearing this message, everyone had confessed that they are the wicked. We shouldn't even get angry with our kids. We shouldn't be rough. My plans, my methods, my possessions, and my self must be removed. We don't live by our possessions. I don't force my church members with visions. The important thing is to be a vessel that can achieve a vision. God will use you when the vessel is made. The self must be killed.

{4.7} Then people ask, why do the wicked punish the righteous? This is contradictory. First they called their people evil and then they called the Chaldean? evil. If I live a Christian life, everything should be blessed; yet why isn't my child successful even though I offer tithe and attend services? This is not the definition of the righteous people of God. The righteous praise God even during times of suffering. The life of Hosea seems to appear cursed to everyone, but God doesn't look at it that way. As he brings his wife, he realizes how much God loves the fallen Israel. Of course, sin causes suffering, but the matter is that through hardships and sufferings we get to learn God's plan. In the midst of sufferings, it would be wiser to accept God's providence as a blessing rather than asking, "Why?" which doesn't solve the problem. Asking, "Why does that person torment me?" doesn't solve the problem. A wicked person torments me because I don't live according to the righteousness. Evil exists for the righteous. There are the wicked among the people of Israel. Not everyone in the Church is righteous. Surely the wicked exist there.

{4.8} In the history of Christian missions, the biggest problem was that we gave out bread prior to the gospel. The mission shouldn't go from a rich country to a poor country, but it should be based on who is more mature and who holds on to the word of God firmer. Look at how Israel has accomplished their missions in Rome. Our mission is to raise leaders of the country. The reason why God has His eyes fixed on Singapore is because even though they are wealthy, they serve and desire God like they are not wealthy.

{4.9} In Chapter 2, the principles of God moving the universe are the principle of grace and the principle of sowing and reaping. The principle of God moving the world is the principle of grace. Without knowing the principle of grace, one's life would become weary. Also, there wouldn't be any satisfaction or sense of happiness. If we live by the principle of grace, we can be filled with happiness. Habakkuk 2:4 talks about the principle of grace. On the other hand, Habakkuk 3:6-7 talks about the principle of sowing and reaping, but this isn't the principle in which the righteous live by. The exposition of the Beatitudes states that those who mourn will be blessed. This means desiring God's grace. Our lives would never become weary when we live only by the things that God has given to us. From every beginning, we make choices by grace. Like Galatians 5:24, it is taking everything step by step with the Holy Spirit, moving according to the voice and instructions of the Spirit. Move according to the Spirit, and surely the life of the righteous will be slow to move. If we live by grace, the person next to us may feel annoyed and irritated because of our slow tempo. But if God tells us to move, we must move very swiftly. The life of the righteous should wait on God to work.

{4.10} The snake of desire has five heads. These five are the desire of possession, the

desire of comfort, the desire of achievement, and this desire of achievement goes together with the desire of fame. The desire of authority is captured through earthly pleasures, and lastly, there is the desire of idolatry. This desire may feel like a human's basic instinct, but it wasn't like this upon the creation of human beings. Isn't there anyone who doesn't want to possess? No, everyone wants to possess. The history of this nation and world was unwrapped by this desire and it resulted people to reap whatever they sow. The principle of this world is that some work hard and others arise to take them all. Then the desire of comfort is activated to protect what they reap. Human beings live according to these five desires. We must eliminate these five snakes' heads and trample them down. It is unimaginable how intense this battle is. People who have learned about the spiritual life incorrectly live such a life even more. We must be able to hear the sound of the snake darting out its tongue. In today's passage, Habakkuk appears to grow out from resentment to understanding and the offering of thanksgiving and praise.

Main

{4.11} In verse 2, "your fame" refers to the fame regarding the work of God. He was surprised to hear about this fame. First, he was surprised to find that God's work is to raise the wicked to prevent the corruption of His people. Why am I suffering? It is all for the righteous and the Church. Jesus Christ, the Church, and the world. If the Church moves according to the authority of Jesus Christ, the authority to rule over the world would be given, but if it doesn't move according to the will of God, then the world will dominate the Church and make it suffer. Secondly, he was surprised at how God allows the evil to exist in order to find the true grain within the scattered weeds. In other words, God has raised the evil to flourish the righteous. That is how we can be thankful for our sufferings and that is how God can sort out the righteous. At first, everyone may seem like the righteous. But the weeds will be blown away when suffering comes like the wind. The true one will be clearly discerned through suffering. The Korean Church experienced a great revival in 1907, but because of the suffering they faced from the Japanese colony, some accepted the demand of shrine worship. Thirdly, the work of the Lord is to wipe out the wicked perfectly. To destroy a powerful nation like Babylon is like saying the U.S.A. would disappear tomorrow. Today, Babylon and Persia have all disappeared. Everything trembles at the supremacy of God. Verse 16 says that Habakkuk trembled. This is a great fear of the judgment.

{4.13} There are four types of people in this world. First, it is the righteous, or the anointed one. What God wants in the end is to flourish the righteous. God doesn't want to make the Church a place where a couple hundred thousand members simply gather, but what God wants is to make it a place where the righteous gather together. They are the 144,000 people recorded in the book of Revelation. Yul-Bang Church doesn't gnash our teeth to gather weeds, but to become a gathering of the righteous. That is why God importunes Yul-Bang Church. The main focus of God's interests is on the righteous. Even now, God moves this world in order to flourish the righteous because all will be vanished but only the glory of

the righteous will exist in the kingdom of God. Therefore, if we are barely attending worship services while compromising with the world, then we must quit. What is there that I can't do if God can use me to make you righteous? Long ago, there was a deaconess who was once very faithful to Buddhism, while her daughter was a sincere Christian. One day, her daughter ran into a taxi robber, where she was raped and killed. So the mother went to a church wondering why God had allowed her daughter to be killed, because she knew for a fact that her daughter would have been praying even in the moment of her death. The mother ended up receiving grace at the church and realized that God had killed her daughter to make herself the righteous one. There isn't anything God can't do to make people righteous.

{4.14} The second type is the weed, or the problematic. The weed indicates those who don't obey. If the weed grows larger, the Church will perish and the nation will perish. Although Annas and Caiaphas talked about obeying, they never obeyed even as they ministered 5 million people. What God makes us pray about through Habakkuk is to remove the weeds and to flourish the righteous. The reason why a pastor unconditionally gathers his members is because he can't hear the cries of his church members in hell. We must keep this in mind. Until the day I finish my ministry, not a single person from Yul-Bang Church should go to hell but rather, we must gloriously enter the kingdom of God. People might believe that simply coming to Yul-Bang Church would make them righteous, but please go to another church if you don't have the hope to become righteous. In other words, become righteous. God's plan is to remove the weeds.

{4.15} The third type is the worldly people. Another reason why God allows suffering is to find His people among the worldly people. What's weird is that there are people seeking God in times of suffering, even though they don't come to church. On the other hand, there are those who harden their hearts when they face suffering. God is still looking for His people in the midst of nonbelievers.

{4.16} The fourth type is people who are wholly attached to evil. They are the people who completely deny God. Even now, God allows hardships and sufferings in order to flourish the righteous over these four types of people. Oh Lord, You have given hardships and sufferings for Your works to punish the wicked, to remove the weeds, and to flourish the righteous. Give us hardships and sufferings, and quickly achieve Your works of flourishing the righteous. "Renew them in our day..." Ignorance may make people courageous. The more we say this verse, the more sufferings come. This is because these words mean for sufferings to come quickly. "Remember mercy..." This means hit us, but with tenderness. Habakkuk had a strong self-righteousness, so he asked God to not only hit Israel lightly, but also to hit the wicked lightly as well. In the past, he clapped with joy when the wicked had fallen and failed, but now he feels sad in his heart about the wicked having to suffer. So he is asking God for mercy. He grew from resentment to understanding, and he reached the level of embracing them through thanksgiving and praise. When we realize that the wicked exists because of us, we can grow to have a merciful faith that would embrace the wicked.

{4.17} In verse 3, Teman is south and east of Edom, and Mount Paran is a vast open area located under Kadesh Barnea, above the border of Egypt. Today, coming from Teman and Mount Paran means that he is coming from all around. This and today's whole passage depict the scene where Babylon tramples down the entire Palestine area, and where the army of Babylon is coming. Idol worshipers go and find their god on their own but in our case, God comes first, without us having to go look for Him. So then why is it that we are unable to encounter the God who comes to us? It is because we are not open, reluctant to give up and still holding on to ourselves.

{4.18} "God came..." signifies that his faith had been transformed from a faith of resentment to a faith of understanding. He realizes how weak and how wicked he is, and he learns how corrupted and sees how sinful he is. Babylon is invading because of the evil that fills the land, but he sees this as God coming to the land. In 1 Timothy 1:5, the pipe of love is made with a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith and here, a good conscience means seeing everything as God. This is the filtering of evil. In the past we said, "Oh, that thief!" but now we feel pity for the person and we see our own sins instead. No evil can enter a person who has the eyes that see God in everything and has ears that hear God in everything. This might sound absurd, but it is not. When we are open and know what kind of people we are with thanksgiving and praise, any history of God's judgment is considered as God's provision for us.

{4.19} When suffering comes, solving the problem behind that suffering with our own power indicates that we are at the stage of immaturity. Once we grow mature, we don't just remove sufferings, but rather, we ascend to the level of being able to overcome those sufferings. That is how we become a person who doesn't take suffering as suffering. This is the level that God expects from you. In his self-contradiction, Habakkuk only considers Yahweh as God of his people, but now he knows God as God of the universe. Therefore, he now finds God in anything that he sees. Just as in Psalm 18, as God's name is filled in the whole earth, he is able to see everything through the goodness of God. Thus, defining a person as righteous or as wicked depends on us. We may see the wicked as the righteous because we have been transformed. As we become opened and see how corrupted we are, we can accept God, and as we see things through His eyes, we can confess that His glory covered the heavens. Such life of faith is not possible if we live a life of faith filled with resentment. But now we are given the eyes that see even Babylon coming for destruction as the glory of God.

{4.20} Everything is your choice. Wounds, evil, sin, and filthy things are also your choices. But instead of choosing these things, we may choose God and His goodness. Then our souls wouldn't be hurt. That is how we don't get contaminated. This is the filtering of evil and this is how the people of God are supposed to live. Therefore, we can't go any further if we always judge others, whether they are good or bad; however, the righteous embrace instead of judge. The more I grow, the less I speak to people. The reason why I speak less as I grow more is because what can I say when everyone is a same sinner in God's eyes? Babylon

is invading, but this sounds like praise. He hears shoutings to kill Israel, but even this sound is heard as praise. He is crazy. One must go crazy in order to become a prophet. When David was chased by Absalom, Shimei cursed David so people around him rose to kill Shimei, but David told them to leave him alone because God was speaking through his mouth. Even the sound of cursing was heard as the sound of praise. The whole universe is filled with the sound of praise. When someone points out our faults we get offended and say, "Why do you care?" out of great arrogance, but it is actually because we are unable to hear God's voice yet. So when someone tells us about our blunder, we must be very humble. We shouldn't stiffen our necks. It is because our ears are not opened yet. We should admit our faults when someone points them out.

{4.22} In verse 4, "His splendor is like sunrise..." means that until now, God's grace was like a candlelight to Habakkuk who wasn't thankful. So everything under the candlelight seemed to be clean, but after he reached the level of thanksgiving and praise he realized that he is a sinner because he now saw himself under sunlight. We used to consider ourselves as the righteous because we have committed only six sins when others have committed seven. Yet as we see ourselves under the sunlight, we scream because it isn't six sins, but six hundred. If we continuously give ourselves up and understand the system of history, we will get to the center of the light. Once God's magnificent light flashes and our eyes open up, we can't even think about doing anything. The righteous stay still, and a life may seem to take no particular action, but it would part the Red Sea just by holding up one's hands. This is grace. Just gathering multitudes of people won't work. Even though it may be a small number of people, God will work if His righteousness is revealed through these people.

{4.23} "Rays flashed from his hand..." This means a horn. Habakkuk knew God as the powerful God from before, but after his eyes were opened with the light of God's grace he came to realize the true, almighty power of God. The authority of God as it is written in John 10:8 about the Holy Spirit and as the eye of the Hurricane being real, is not about breaking and destroying things, but it is an event that transforms us in God's quietness. He saw this authority emerging from God's quietness.

{4.24} "Hidden..." also means experiencing God's amazing power of purifying the righteous by using the wicked. When we look at this verse, it seems as if Paul had been influenced by it. Paul uses the phrase "the secret of the gospel" very often in the book of Romans and in the book of Galatians. A secret means that it is something known only to me and not to anyone else. Therefore, Paul is saying that he has a revelation in which God had given only to him. "Only I have realized God's intimate and profound thing." Habakkuk is saying that only he has realized God's wisdom and the astonishing situation of purifying the righteous through the wicked. He is saying, "I have come to realize that I have this amazing wisdom of God and God's power that transforms the righteous by allowing the existence of evil." Habakkuk praises the things that he had realized in the stage of thanksgiving and praise. When the Israelites praise, it means they are singing about the glory of God that they have encour-

tered. When Habakkuk understood the history, a new world opened up. And he is praising such an amazing providence of God.

{4.25} In verse 5, "Plaque went before him..." This indicates the power of God's judgment. Plaque specifies germs and pestilence specifies typhoid, and these judgments come from God's foot?. As mentioned before, Habakkuk will never take this history of God raising Babylon to judge Israel and the hardship and sufferings of this world as something that will discourage his faith and say, "Believing God doesn't make things better." Evil is under God's control and suffering comes from God. Even a single bird in this world wouldn't fall without God's will. In other words, everything comes from God. He asked, "Why does the good God allow evil?" But now he has realized that God has control over evil spirits, angels, and the entire creation to use for God's will and glory, including even the wicked things. Therefore, what is there to complain about if everything is being made in God's providence? Hence, whatever God gives us whether they are good or bad is the best of the best. Every problem behind evil gets solved here. The idea of "I must be successful and I must own" comes from immature thinking, but all of the plans that God have in store for me are the best of the best. Since everything is for me to have the best God-given life, who cares if it is a trial, who cares if it is goodness, and who cares if it is sickness? Would you only praise God if everything goes well? Now Habakkuk is praising God even under a terrifying situation.

{4.26} In Lamentations, Jeremiah praises God under an extreme situation where people are barbequing their own children. In Lamentations 3:5, they wait for the war and expect Babylon to invade and demolish everything, and they wait because they consider that as goodness. They are calm as they wait for God's judgment. What can we do? We must remember that we can't do anything. We are filled with things that are trained by our evil motives, even to the core. We must be able to see the heads of the five snakes wriggling. It is scary. Many people think that living by grace is impossible since it is not embedded in their lives at all. You might say, "Pastor, try to live in this world if that is possible." It is certainly impossible to do so with our own power and that is why we must rely on God. Do not say you can't live like that without even trying, but talk about it after you try.

{4.27} In verse 6, "... shook the earth..." You wouldn't imagine how massive God's judgment is; God can cause all nations to vibrate only with a single glance. The ancient mountains and age-old hills imply people who fell into the desire of comfort, the symbol of the wicked. In chapter 2 verse 9, God is willing to judge the desire of comfort and the desire of achievement that come from the wicked who try to defend their belongings. The desire of comfort is the evidence of not living by God. People who live by God do not live by gathering things on their own but they live with the things that God gives them. The characteristic of a Christian is living by the things that are given by God. Wanting to live by the Nile River indicates that the desire of comfort is activated. How much does God hate the desire of comfort? In Genesis chapter 11, God called Abraham righteous as he said, "Your descendants will become a great multitude like these stars." Yet this confirmation of righteousness was given after he offered

Isaac at the age of 130. Why is the growth of Abraham's faith so slow? It is because he had a strong desire of comfort. In Genesis chapter 11, Terah, the father of Abraham, took them to Haran from Ur of the Chaldeans, which is current Iran. Terah dies in Haran and there is a reason for his death. Haran is located at the border of Persia and beyond Haran, the law enforcement power of the nation becomes no longer effective. Abraham was hesitant because this protected him, but after God took away Terah's life, he was awakened and he finally left his country, people, and his father's house. However, because of his desire of comfort he still took Lot with him, but he was troubled because of Lot. He also made contracts with his wife and sold her at least twice according to the Bible. Isaac also sold his wife twice. Faith can't grow with the desire of comfort. The desire of comfort is what God continuously broke from Abraham. In Exodus chapter 1, there are midwives. Pharaoh gave out a command to kill all the newborn sons of the Israelites, but instead of living by the desire of comfort, the Israelites lived by God. So they went to Pharaoh and lied, having faith that they would survive if God protected them. Pharaoh believed their lies and God blessed the midwives. People of faith shouldn't live by their desire of comfort. Only Yahweh is my shield and my fortress.

{4.28} In verse 6, "His ways are eternal..." Habakkuk has finally realized that this is how God moved the history of the people and the world ever since the very beginning.

{4.29} In verse 7, Cushan and Midian are the people tormenting Israel. The tent and dwelling signify the basis of all their lives. This means God will destruct the wicked even to their foundation, in which God has used to raise the righteous. We shouldn't envy the success of the wicked. They surely do get their judgments. If the wicked come running to push us, all we have to do is just smile and tell them to go ahead and try it. Then God pays back everything for us. In verse 8, "When you rode your horse..." He sees Babylon riding a horse as God riding on His horse. This is astounding. When I preached on Ephesians 1, I have mentioned that God has His guitar and praises us as the praise of His glory. This is an astonishing perspective. Also, it says that God is riding on the victorious chariot. The judgment of the Israelites isn't a mere judgment. Since God allows suffering in order to save us, suffering isn't really a mere suffering. Suffering becomes deadly when it is taken as just a mere suffering. Therefore we can say, "Suffering isn't a mere suffering anymore, but it exists in order to renew us." God is coming on His horse not to break the river but to renew the righteous. It is fun to live with God.

{4.30} In verse 9, "You uncovered Your bow..." He is coming not to judge the world, but to purify the righteous. Our lives are painful because of our limitations, where suffering becomes suffering and misfortune becomes misfortune.

{4.31} In verse 10, "The mountains saw You..." Even the order of creation turns upside down because of the extreme situation regarding God's judgment. But Habakkuk is quiet in the midst of all this. God's judgment is fearful, but Habakkuk is calm.

{4.32} Verse 11 is saying the same thing. The judgment of God is extremely brutal.

Verse 12 is a direct expression of this judgment. In verse 13, “people” indicates the people of God in the world and “the anointed ones” refer to the righteous. Thus, God’s purpose is to flourish the righteous in the midst of suffering. All problems have to do with us, and the church. We can’t blame anything else. We shouldn’t protest against mass media which intentionally reveals only the negative views of the Church, but we should instead be thankful. We must admit our corruption and we must repent. Even evil spirits tell us to repent. The corruption of the Church is making the world like this. “You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness” means that the wicked in which God has used to raise Israel will surely face judgment. He will be stripped down from head to toe. In other words, even their names will disappear from this earth. Habakkuk takes the judgment of Israel with peace, but the judgment of the wicked is fearful to him. He is afraid of the ruthlessness and brutality of the judgment. God dreadfully shows how they would be taken away from after they have taken from others.

{4.33} In verse 14, “Devour the wretched...” It is the desire of possession. Things that the wicked had taken would be taken away from them. The wicked will reap as they sow. How would they be taken? “With his own spear...” They will destroy themselves. God’s judgment brings self-destruction to people. Inner decay is the wheel of history. The great water indicates the destruction of all nations.

{4.34} In verse 16, the judgment of the wicked is so serious that even Habakkuk is scared. He sees the power of God’s judgment and he trembles. Daniel also trembled when he went into God’s presence.

{4.35} In verse 17, “Though the fig tree...” means that Babylon had stomped on everything and that nothing has remained, yet there is thanksgiving and praise because of God. This is the mature faith. Daniel and his three friends said, “We might be thrown into the blazing furnace. But the God we serve is able to bring us out of it alive. But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” If we are poor, God will make us rich and if we are in trouble, God will deliver us. However, even if He does not, we still must serve Him. Even though we die in poverty, even though we die in sickness and even though we die under a terrible circumstance, our blessing should be God Himself, and not the things that God has given you

Conclusion

{4.36} Yul-Bang Church will face much more suffering as we spread out to all the nations. However, I don’t consider it a glory for Yul-Bang Church to walk on the road that is wide and broad. We can’t go easily in the future either. But if it is a road for us to build up a Glorious Church, then we will surely go and we won’t stop. We shouldn’t only praise God because of the things He has given to us and stumble when He doesn’t give, but we must rejoice because of God Himself. The Lord Yahweh is my strength, but I have mentioned earlier that the strength of the wicked is the things that they own. On the other hand, Yahweh

is the only source of strength for the righteous. The righteous only live by God. So we would become blessed people who would engage in fellowship with God at a high place up above. We must cut off all the worldly standards. Becoming misfortunate is feeling painful because of the thought of having to pay one's own price. But if we live by God, this is not so. God is still searching for the righteous even now. He looks for the righteous who would live a glorious life when He comes down to this earth. The righteous should live only by faith. In other words, it is living by the principle of grace.

5 . MALACHI (1)

1 : 1 - 5

1. An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.
2. "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob,
3. but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."
4. Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins." But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD.
5. You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD -even beyond the borders of Israel!'

Malachi (1) 1:1-5 I have loved you

The title of this message is "I Have Loved You." I am continuing the exposition on the Minor Prophets since I began with Habakkuk. The exposition on the Minor Prophets or the Major Prophets is rather difficult for me personally. Why? Because I am an apostle, so the apostolic words particularly Pauline letters come easy for me. It is like a customized cloth that fits you perfectly. However, when it comes to prophetic books, I have to fall down before God seeking for His revelation because I am not a prophet. Although I am not a prophet, I ask God to pour out the Spirit God had poured out to His prophets so I can proclaim the word with full understanding of His heart in my exposition just like them.

Personally I find the prophetic books very difficult to preach. Nevertheless, God gives me grace. It was great to pray at the beginning of the first worship service. I have prayed a lot to receive the spirit of prophets for the message. Habakkuk was powerful. The essence of the wickedness is being extracted and our repentance is going deeper. So we continue with Malachi.

Our church is now five years old and we are now at the cross road and moving toward new direction. We don't have like level 1 or level 2, but I sense that God is leading our spirituality to the second level. The words from God since the end of last year are extraordinary and God has plans as we go through the book of Malachi. Please long for it. There are things that we should understand beginning with introduction in this exposition. There are things for us to see. Please pray to God to give you much blessing through the exposition.

Please do not come to church on Sunday morning without preparation. Although you may not live the whole week like the Lord's Day, treat Saturday like the Lord's Day. Set Saturday apart from the world and live a holy life on Saturdays. You go out to the world on Saturdays and watch TV until Saturday night. I know we do not watch TV as a whole church and we shouldn't. Please get ready for the worship service on the Lord's Day with yearning all day Saturday.

I hope our nation will soon turn around and live according to the will of God and restore the glory of the church, so we can work only four days a week and rest for three days. What do we do with three days of rest? We train in the church for three straight days every week. That's what I want to see. Please take Saturday to prepare for the Lord's Day and do not ask me to officiate wedding on Saturday. I mean that. Such request puts me on the tough spot. Monday works the best to have a wedding in our church. If you want me to officiate your wedding, please set it on Monday. If you don't plan on having your wedding on Monday, please don't ask me to officiate your wedding. We have many associate pastors who can officiate your wedding on other days. I can only do it on Monday! We have many spinsters in our church. Please if you want me to officiate your wedding, make Monday as your wedding day.

Let's turn our attention to the book of Malachi. I have loved you! It sounds like some

secular love song. We will look at first five verses as introduction and hope it gets you going. One conflict I have in my preparation of this exposition is that the Book of Malachi speaks mostly to the priests. Of course, there are some words for the lay people, but it is mostly for the priests. This exposition will turn all the pastors and their wives upside down if I preach this during the pastor's conference in Zoe Ministry.

Pastors were turned upside down when I preached on the book of Ephesians because it is the doctrine of church. I still remember when I first preached on it in the prayer mountain in Onsan. All the pastors got on their knees and received the words in tears. Why? Because it was all about churches. It was practical for the pastors.

The book of Malachi is the same. I get blessed so much but I am not sure if it will be the same with you today. We are all royal priests and this is the proper approach to receive the word of God. If you think "oh this is the message for pastors," then you won't be blessed much with the word. I consider all our church members as the royal priests. The exposition on Malachi is not just for the pastors but to all the royal priests. You are all preparing to out to the corners of the world as missionary and once you are given the green light, you will go out starting with Bhutan. Who will go out to Philippine and Taiwan? I am praying about it. I know the ones that are ready will go out.

The emphasis we have as we begin this exposition is to whom the messages are addressed. It is not only the priests but also to you. Otherwise, this is useless. God has a plan to do something in our church through the explosion of book of Malachi. As we kick off this first message about the deep love of God pray that the same spirit which came upon Malachi would come upon us as well. Consequently, we may understand the heart of God and receive His same love that Malachi understood and thus recorded in his book. Let's look at a few things.

First, let's take a look at the author. Who wrote this book? Malachi recorded it. The Septuagint records Malachi as the author. I have a concern that you are not familiar with Hebrews. I am also pondering whether it is the right time to teach Greek to the congregation or not. We should learn Hebrew and Latin because we are all going to be missionaries. Church members will continue to study abroad like in America for their doctorate degrees and upon their return we will start up the seminary and train up the church members in full gear. God is going to unify all different languages through Yulbang Church. We worship God in English and soon in Chinese. Next is the Cambodian language, Japanese, and German. All the languages of the world will be unified according to Genesis 11 here in Yulbang Church. In order to get ready for that we should pick up the root of language: Greek, Hebrew, and Latin.

Everyone will go out to the world as a missionary, so you should be good in hermeneutics. That's how you can preach! Of course, you can imitate my messages, but the imitation and your own messages are different.

In Hebrews, alphabet named yod comes at the end of a noun. It looks like a single

quotation mark. This yod indicates the possessive noun "Malachi." Malachi has two meanings: an angel and a king. Malachi is an angel and because of possessive noun of yod it is rendered my messenger. According to Septuagint it is rendered God's messenger.

A question is raised. Who is Malachi? Unfortunately, there is no record of Malachi. There is hardly any mention of him anywhere. Theologians debated much over that in the last 2,000 years. Some said, "Malachi is not a real person," and others said, "Yes, he is." Some went on to say that Malachi is the angel not the real person. However, an important discovery was made. Someone found a book entitled Life of Prophet which was written in fourth century A.D. It has a record of Jewish tradition which contains some information about Malachi.

According to Life of Prophet, Malachi lived a holy life since his childhood. It is important to live like him devoutly and purely by praying and reading the word of God. Everyone around him paid attention to him and praised him for his piety. They thought 'what's going to happen to his life?' Just like John the Baptist 'how is God going to use him?' People had high expectation on Malachi. That's why his nickname was angel. In addition, Malachi was handsome. He looked good and he was pious. It is not easy to have both. Malachi was so devout and pure in his spirit that when he prophesied, angel came and wrote it down. Angels wrote them down and went back to God and repeated this over and over.

Does this sound too spiritual to you? There is a theological ground to back this up. Paul says in Ephesians 3:10, "So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places." The church reveals wisdom of God to all different angels. Paul is a very sharp man. Once the church joins the rank of the glorious church and God acknowledges it, angels don't receive information from God or trained by God but the church teaches angels. Please don't take it as too spiritual. We have many members in our church whose spiritual eyes are open and see how we offer up worship service to God. When we worship God in our church, angels closely guard the worship service to a point Satan cannot break through. Next week we will commission a missionary to Philippine. If an amazing secret of mission is proclaimed, angels write it down and proclaim it before God. That's the word of Ephesians 3:10.

How is this possible? Holy Spirit does not dwell inside the angels, but He indwells us. The Spirit of the Creator who is indwelling us speaks the revelation for us. Revelation is a plain and ordinary word in the Bible. It means "God speaks to us" and "To open." The Greek word is apocalypse.

Korean churches exhibit allergic reactions to revelation and perceive it as mystery, but it is not. If God doesn't reveal it to us, how do we know? The word, revelation, is an ordinary word. The revelations come upon a church God acknowledges and the worship He receives and they also reveal all different wisdom to angels.

That's who Malachi was. When Malachi spoke, angels readied themselves to write

down his words. They would in turn take it up to God and repeat it. It downed on me this is what Ephesians 3:10 means. Once the field commander, which is the local church, is acknowledged by God and it becomes the foundation of defense of truth at the end time, it naturally defends the glorious worship God receives in the church. It would be unusual not to do that. The corruption of church is directly related to the corruption of worship service. I would rather die than let that happen in our church.

Why is the church building project so important? Whether we construct the church building or not, what's more important is our offering of pure worship God finds worthy of receiving. It is so easy for a big church with full of resources to make impact in the world. We may be small but we make big impact in the world. Our Singapore conference shakes up the nation of Singapore. Taiwan conference shakes up Taiwan. We will shake up Africa once God leads us to hold conference in Africa.

"Clean soul" sounds so good my ears. Malachi was a clean and a pure soul. He had such a tremendous influence at the first coming of Jesus Christ. Of course, other prophets had influence like Habakkuk. What is the characteristic of Habakkuk's prophecy? It is the interpretation of history. His prophecy looks to the future of history and points to the direction of history. The scale of Habakkuk's prophecy is huge.

Malachi seemed to be a prophet but he was more like a pastor. His prophecy has a pastoral characteristic. Malachi was excellent in prophesying over the incident of individuals. May the Holy Spirit who had come upon Malachi come upon you to teach you God's heart! Holy Spirit came upon Malachi revealing God's heart to him so that he could prophesy accordingly. Let the Spirit of God come upon you not the spirit of Malachi, so you would know His heart!

We typically have to experience things to really know them. I spoke on Psalm 119:97 that it's not necessary. The word of God created the whole universe; therefore, when the wisdom of God's word comes upon us, we can know things that we don't experience. That's why the author of Psalm 119 says in verse 99, "I have more insight than all my teachers."

Likewise may the Holy Spirit who came upon Malachi descend on us to open the characteristics of Malachi's prophecy which is touching an individual as a man of God. He had the pastor's heart. That's what we should imitate. Malachi prophesied out of God's amazing love for each person.

Second, investigate the date of the book. Why is that important? Knowing the date of the book leads to understanding of the background. In another word, we can understand the will of God which led Malachi to say particular words. The date of the book of Malachi is more important than other letters which is the reason I am addressing it. The date of the book of Habakkuk is not so important but for Malachi it is. In short, investigate the date and understand the will of God and why He had to say so and so through Malachi in that situation.

I have shared with you before that we ought to understand the Bible with God's intention in mind. If we don't, then we can interpret the way we want to. The church members are corrupted because pastors preach according to their personal intention. The blessing God has given to our church with regard to hermeneutics is clear understanding of God's intention. God's intention for the book of Galatians is to preserve the pure gospel of God. For Ephesians it is the church. Have a clear understanding of God's intention.

We have one problem with the date of Malachi. Other prophetic books state the date of books. For example, Isaiah ministered from Uzziah to Hezekiah according to Isaiah 1:1. The historical account reveals the period a prophet lived and served. In case of Amos, he records the big earthquake during the reign of Uzziah. That's how we know the date. Theologians do a good job with them and they deserve praise. However, we do not have such account in the book of Malachi on top of the lack of information of Malachi. One thing we know for sure is that it was written after the Babylonian captivity. This is clear; we have three evidences.

First, Malachi speaks of governor in 1:8. When did the Israel have governors in its history? Israel had kings and governors emerge in its history after the Babylonian exile. This evidence backs up the date of the book after the Babylonian captivity. The date is important. God doesn't reveal the date of the book just so that we have it as mere knowledge. God had intention.

Second, Edomites were destroyed according to 1:3 "But I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation, and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness." Edomites increasingly became weak after the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. In 5th century B.C., the Nabateans conquered the Petra, the impregnable fortress of Edomites. Nabateans are Arabs and they chased Edomites away to the Arabian desert. Edomites ended up changing their name to Idumean. In the NT which Idumean became the king of Jews? Herod the Great. Who discovered the Qumran dead sea scroll? Idumean! The speaking of the destruction of Edomites dates the Malachi 5th Century BC. This is important because the Nabateans ruled the area of the Petra for about 500 years until the Rome destroyed it in AD 105. The Petra resurfaces in the time of battle of Armageddon. There is another important agent which I will address later. Why did God destroy Edomites? We can find a slight answer in Malachi. I raise a question in my reading of the Scripture "why did that happen?" It leads to search for the records. I search for them through the words of the Holy Spirit and revelation.

Third, Malachi speaks of "temple" in 3:1. Furthermore, Malachi speaks of tithe in 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows." Malachi speaks of "My house" which refers to the temple. Does anyone believe this book was written in time of Solomon? Probably not! The Solomon's Temple was destroyed and it was later rebuilt known as Zerubbable's Temple. When was the temple rebuilt? It was BC 516! Which prophet was ministering during this

time? Haggai and Zechariah! The book of Zechariah is right before the Malachi but the separation of date is about 60 to 70 years between them. The messages of Haggai and Zechariah who lived during the same era are similar.

Whose message does the Malachi resemble? Nehemiah! Both had the strong desire to bring about religious reformation. Malachi also speaks of emphasis on tithe, on prohibition of divorce and mixed marriage. This is similar to Nehemiah. When did Nehemiah return to Jerusalem? Nehemiah did not rebuild the temple but the wall of Jerusalem in 52 days. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem in BC 444.

During the time of Nehemiah particularly around BC 444 there was a strong desire for religious reformation. Why? After the completion of the wall the joy and thrill of the reconstruction of the temple started to dissipate and the corruption started to settle in. God used prophets like Nehemiah and Malachi to preach repentance. Because I don't see it in the Malachi, I think Malachi wrote the book around BC 450.

There was God's will for the Malachi to come 60 or 70 years later than Zechariah and Haggai. What is God's will? After the reconstruction of the temple their joy of it started to dissipate. In addition, they started doubt the immediate realization of next prophecy. Prophet Haggai and young pastor Zechariah quoted Isaiah's prophecy like "God will use Jerusalem as the light of Gentiles. I will do great works through you. I will also restore you and your influence will cover the whole Palestine." Their prophecy sounded immediate to them; however, after 50 years of passing the prophecy was still not fulfilled. Therefore, Israelites started their doubt over the prophecy.

Moreover, the famine in the Palestine became worse. Instead of working hard to help relieve the suffering of people the leaders preyed on them. This story is in Malachi. They further oppressed the people and exploited them. Distrust was rampant among the people and no one trusted each other. We see so many instances of "dealing treacherously" throughout the Malachi. The poverty also resulted in the divorce. Like when Korea faced IMF, many families broke up. The Jewish family also broke up. Consequently, they disdained the covenant of God. What do I mean by that? They said, "God does not love us anymore. Not anymore!" Moral corruptions and spiritual corruptions followed. The leaders were arrogant and corrupted. They even mocked at the word of God like "It is useless to believe God. The wicked is more prosperous. The wicked is richer. I don't want to believe Jesus anymore." The doubt over God started to settle in their hearts like "God has forgotten us."

Suddenly, Malachi shows up and shares the gospel "God still loves you! He still loves you. Even at this moment He loves you. The covenant we have together is still valid." Consequently, the nationwide revival breaks out. The failing Yahweh faith is rekindled and its influence is now leading them to the time of first coming of Jesus Christ.

We surely want to see a prophet and an evangelist like Malachi. I don't know how much God is going to use me. God is doing many things through our church. Amazing

works of repentance take place in our conferences. However, it doesn't measure up against prophets and particularly Malachi. The intention for the book of Malachi is being realized in this age with this background.

Please long for your church! Pray that your church would be holy and pure that when your church prophesies, angels would write them down. My hope is not making something big or make big splash. I have no intention at all and God is my witness. The most important thing for me is for the Yulbang Church members to be holy and pure in this age regardless of the number. If you are holy and pure, you can't help that the world will persecute you. The believers will persecute you. They may ask, "Are you the only one that's pure?" My reply is "Should I be impure like you?" Of course, I can't do that. I should be pure and I am willing to die for that. So I can offer up the worship service that is worthy of God and I can lay the foundation of gospel's defense that is willing to die for the word of God. That's our vision and that's what we will do. If God gives, that's great. Even if He doesn't, it is ok.

Third, let's look at the content of whole book as a part of this introduction. What is the book of Malachi saying to us? When you draw a big picture, it becomes easier to receive the word of God. "God still loves you." Of course, it is found in chapter 1, but they haven't heard it for 70 years since they lost the joy of reconstruction of the temple. When their doubt started to settle in "Hasn't God given up on us," they heard "God still loves you!" Israelites watched the fall of their kinsmen Edomites and they doubted God's love "won't God destroy us as well?" However, God said through Malachi, "No, My covenant is still in effect." The book of Malachi is confirming the love of God.

Hasad is used for "love." However, the books of Malachi and Deuteronomy use the word ahab. God loves you so much that He uses ahab. In the book of Malachi, God uses it seven times. Ahab is used for family members. The most important point in the whole book is God loves us. Malachi is speaking of the amazing love of God.

Another thing to notice in the whole book is how come you don't feel the love of God? The reason for that is because you are full of sin. Malachi begins harsh proclamation against sin. "Your worship service is corrupted. Restore it. Your life is corrupted. Purify it. The society has lost the justice. Restore the justice. Do not make reckless remarks." Malachi is telling them stop saying, "God doesn't love us anymore. It is useless to believe in Him." God is stopping the reckless remarks. That is the overall content of the Malachi.

God promises three things when they hear the word, repent, and return to God. First, their names will be written in the book of remembrance and God will honor them. Second, God will heal them like a skipping calves from the stall. Third, God will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children.

Malachi says in 4:6, "And He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their childfree, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse." What if they still refuse to return to God? The blessings will turn into curses. God promises

wonderful blessings in Deuteronomy 28:1 – 14, but if they don't repent and turn away, the blessings will turn into curse. God will cut off their descendents. Next, they will be shamed and insulted. That's the content of Malachi.

The book of Deuteronomy had an absolute impact on the Malachi. Why is the influence of Deuteronomy on the Malachi important? I will address the question later, but now let's address the evidence of Deuteronomy's influence upon the Malachi for now. Malachi uses the deuteronic language and thoughts. Ahab, araah, fear and faithfulness are deuteronic words. The privilege of the Deuteronomy is that Levites can carry out the functions of priests. Who are the priests in Numbers and Leviticus? Only the descendents of Aaron can serve as priests. However, in Deuteronomy and Malachi, Levites are serving as priests. In another word, the book of Malachi is not only for the pastors but also for the lay people. The emphasis on the tithe is found in Malachi. The Law of Moses mentions it in Deuteronomy 4:4. These words in the Malachi are all deuteronic words.

The structure of the Malachi is in the form of question and answer. God asks a question and He answers it. There are six disputes. The question and answer format is rabbis' educational tool. Today's rabbis also use the question and answer to teach. Malachi recorded the book in dispute technique. Let's look at the first dispute. God loves us and when did He love us? That's how the dispute begins. The understanding of six disputes helps us to understand the whole book.

There are two points from verses one to five. The confirmation of love is found in verse two. Malachi confirms "God still loves you." Verses three to five say, "In order to love you like that I destroyed the Edomites." Why did God love us to destroy Edomites? That's the evidence of His love.

Malachi says in verse 1, "The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi." There is an unusual word in this verse compared to other prophetic books in their introduction. That word is the "oracle." Where do we see this word "oracle" beside? It is in Habakkuk. Yes, Habakkuk is using the word oracle in his letter. It means it is so pressing. The prophecy of Habakkuk is also pressing. No one can stand before God without resolving the matter of evil. Malachi means to say, "Hurry up, repent and return to God." That's how pressing it is. He is warning us and giving us the "yellow card." He is calling for repentance. This has to be resolved before God soon in both Malachi and Habakkuk. It is a pressing matter in both books.

God says in verse two, "I have loved you." God has loved us and it is driving me nuts. "God has loved us" is expressing the intensity of His love in ahab. God's heart is burning with love for us, but we do not know it. We turned on Him when He said, "I have loved you." There is nothing God cannot do to love you. God can sacrifice the whole universe just to love one person. Can you believe that? To love you God crucified His only begotten Son. There are so many things of God that we can't comprehend.

I have shared this testimony before. A Christian lady was kidnapped by a taxi driver

who raped and murdered her. The victim's mother was a faithful Buddhist. The more she thought about the tragedy she was angrier. She knew her daughter would have prayed for her God to help her out of the trouble, but He didn't. So, she wanted to know who this God was. This angry mother decided to go to church and find out about this God. When she went to the church, she realized God had sacrificed her daughter for her salvation. There is nothing God is not willing to do to confirm His love to us. He would abandon 99 righteous men to recover the lone lost. That's God! You can say that He is crazy for love.

One thing I want you to see throughout the exposition of Malachi is the amazing love of God. May God increase the injection of His love into us so that we may deeply understand it in our heart! Our church is stagnant at the moment. New members would love how it is now, but from my perspective we are stagnant. That's how much we have stopped receiving the injection of God love. God's word of "I still love you" should suffice us and move us to lay down all things for it. Do not doubt God's love. "When did you love us? I don't think God is listening to my prayer. I don't think God is still loving me!" Please do not say any of them out of your mouth. We will soon see how severely God disciplines the priests who said such wicked words. We should never doubt God.

The word for love in Hebrew is ahab. Hasad comes out many times in OT, but in Malachi ahab is frequently used. This is the characteristic of the Malachi. Let's look in depth of ahab. First, it is love that's found in covenantal books. This is the characteristic of the book of Deuteronomy. One of the theological characteristics of the Deuteronomy is the conclusion of a covenant. What is the difference between covenant and contract? Contract is terminated when both parties no longer reap the benefit. Covenant is different. Even if we say that we don't want God anymore, the covenant is not terminated. We may seem to terminate it from our perspective, but God still waits for us from a long way off. This is the parable of the prodigal son. This covenant is not terminated from God's position. We may wander around because we don't want God anymore, but God is still waiting for us. If we continue to neglect God's heart and wander around like the prodigal son, we set the heart of God on fire. Let us not forget God killed Jesus for His love. Believe one soul is more precious than the whole world. Why? Because Jesus died for a soul that is more precious than the whole world and He is willing to destroy the world for a precious soul.

I have seen God doing this in last 19 years of my walk with Him. A restaurant called Viking is located in the city of Ansan. It is far from where I live and the quality of food is not so great. I didn't say to God that I like it, but somehow God found out and He set the best Viking restaurant in the city of Buchun which is so much closer just for me. You don't believe it, huh? God started that restaurant for me. How can I show it to you? There is nothing God cannot do for His love. God created the whole universe for me and for you. Hallelujah! This is ahab. This is God's covenantal love and it is beyond our imagination. "Covenant" is an important word in the Deuteronomy which influenced Malachi.

Ahab can be rendered "choose." God says in verse 2, "I have loved Jacob." It can be

rendered "I have chosen Jacob." Why has God chosen Jacob and given up on Esau? God has chosen us so that God can choose those that have not been chosen. That's the reason for our existence. Our goal in life is not to just live as God's children. God desires us to open the love of God to those that have not been chosen. That's why God chose us.

Ahab is also used at home. The word refers to the merciful heart of a mother upon her child. It means to continue to love the person you have been loving regardless of his condition. Regardless of how Peter betrayed Jesus, Jesus would look on Peter with His eyes full of love toward him and says, "Peter, it is ok. I knew this before so I prayed for you that you wouldn't lose your faith." Shortly after, the rooster crowed three times and Peter consecutively denied Jesus three times. Peter encountered the eyes of Jesus and repented.

God's love is amazing. What if Caiaphas didn't have roosters in his house? The repentance would have been impossible! God had prepared roosters and for them to crow. This is important because this is an example of God's perfect consideration of love. When I returned to Korea from America with full of despair and frustration, I found Hyunkyung in the church. What could have happen to me without her? I probably couldn't get married and couldn't be in ministry now. This is a perfect consideration of God's love. Please turn and look upon the face of your neighbor. What would you have done without him/her? Although he/she may look horrible, God prepared him/her for you. You exist because of him/her. This is God's perfect consideration.

The antonym of ahab is tsar in Hebrew. It means enemy. The deep touch of God's love should flood in. Now we know the heart of the Father through the Malachi, we should not respond "when have you loved us?" whenever God says, "I love you!" Don't say, "If You love us, give us some money!" Instead of responding in a wicked way we should always say, "God, You are right!" Confirm His love for you.

That's what ahab means! God said, "I still love you," but the wicked Israelites reply "when have You loved us?" In our contemporary language, they are saying like if You really love us, give us some money! "If you love us, let us live a comfortable life." That's what they are saying. So, what does God say to the wicked Israelites? God says, "Isn't Esau the brother of Jacob?" They are brothers and God is supposed to love them both. However, that's not what we find. He favors Jacob. He loves Jacob, but hates Esau. God chose Jacob. God's choice of Jacob is the evidence that God loves them. It means several things, but God's choice of Jacob was meant to bring the work of salvation upon unsaved Esau through Jacob. This is very important. This is the reason for our existence. If we lose this, we will also be forsaken by God like Israel. "Forsake" means we will be abandoned.

The mythologies and the histories in the world are written self-centered. What I mean by that is they are centered on each nation. For example, the Korean genesis folk tale is not found in Japanese history. Does Japanese mythology mention Korean tales? No! Everything begins with their nation and ends with their nation. However, the Jewish history is different.

The history of Israel begins in the twelfth chapter of Genesis. Why? Because God chooses the father Abraham who is the father of Israel in chapter 12 of Genesis. Genesis 1 through 11 is all about the world. It is about the Gentiles, Noah, Babel Tower and the events of the world. The significance is that God wanted to embrace the Gentiles and the world with His love through His choice of Abraham.

This is found in third chapter of Galatians. Paul sharply discerned it in Galatians. Paul discovered the reason God had chosen Abraham, his ancestor. God was going to justify the Gentiles by faith in 3:8 and that's the reason God gave the gospel to Abraham. God said, "All the nations will be blessed in you." That was the gospel. In short, God chose Abraham to bless the Gentiles. Is your heart pounding? This is what Israelites misunderstood. Jews didn't know this and Paul is appealing it on behalf of Jews. Paul says in 3:14, "In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." This is incredible! God chose Abraham to bless the Gentiles and to shine His light of love upon them. This is the reason for your existence. God chose you to love all the people.

Paul says in 1Timothy 2:4, "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." That's the reason for your existence. If you forget your reason for your existence, like verse 5 God will go forth to the Gentiles. God has given our church great and glorious visions, but God will only fulfill them when our goal is God, we live by Him, and we are faithful to the ministry with confidence that God will do it. Otherwise, we will be forsaken.

The overall interpretation of the book of John is "We are not of the world, but we are in the world." This is the original interpretation of the John. We can't say this is the wrong interpretation, but it poses some danger. If you do deeper into it, you may fall into spiritual exclusionism. That's what happened to Jews. They became spiritual exclusionist and said, "We are God's chosen people. God chose only us!" Why did God choose you? They don't know that. From God's perspective of love we are in the world, but we are not of the world. The missional interpretation is in the reverse order "we are not of the world, but we are in the world because we are for the world." This is the reason of your existence. That's the reason God chose us. If we do not spread the love of God, the world cannot see it. The Bible is still the truth even though we do not live according to it. However, if we do not live by the Bible, the world cannot see the truth. That's the reason Paul says in 1Timothy 3:15 that we are the foundation of defense of the gospel.

I decided long time ago that I would not tell the church members to evangelize. I sometimes say that but very seldom. Is it because evangelism is not important? No! The source of corruption for Korean churches is gathering many people and increasing in their sizes through evangelism. I served in a mega church before. We had what we call "mobilization Sunday" and we gather all the children in the community giving away \$1 water gun to every child. On our mobilization Sunday the phone line is our church is jammed with so many complaint calls from other churches "why did you take our children?" The average

attendance is 6,000 on a given Sunday, but on the mobilization Sunday we reach 30,000. What good is it? They all go back to their church the next Sunday. This is scary! When I was a Sunday school director, I told them "Do not sell out Jesus for a buck!" Why is the church growth in number so important? They used the evangelism as the measuring stick for the church growth.

If we have the love of God inside, we can't help but to embrace other souls. If you are not embracing others, it means you are blocking out the love of God. If you receive the love of God, it is natural to witness to others and embrace them. Why? Because once the gospel enters into our hearts, the goal of our existence naturally becomes "we are for the world." That's why we get involved in world mission and send out missionaries. Are we doing it because we have lots of money? Are we doing it because we have lots of money left over? No! Once we have the gospel, we naturally embrace others. Naturally, we embrace other souls, the poor, and the sufferer. This is ordinary not special.

That's not a reason to be proud of. We don't even put that information on our church bulletin. Some churches list hundred supporting missionaries on their bulletin when they support them only \$50 a month. If you say, "That's a lot of money," then it is a lot. However, that's not how we do this. If we are to list the supporting missionaries, it will cover up one whole page of our church bulletin. We don't support \$50, but \$300 minimum. You can feel good about that, but don't be proud of it because it is supposed to be ordinary.

Once we receive the gospel we can clearly understand the reason for our existence. When the amazing love of God enters our hearts, we can't help but to embrace other souls. Evangelizing only when told and only on the mobilization Sunday are not desirable. Giving away the prize of gold ring to whoever brings 10 new people is not the way to do this. Once the gospel enters our hearts we naturally evangelize. If you are not embracing other souls, you do not know the love of God. Remember, we are not of the world.

Jesus says in John 17:11b, "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are." We are not of the world. Jesus clearly speaks "that they may be one." "One" in Greek is *heis* which means one in essence. Like God and Jesus became one to become a lump of love we should also become a lump of love. Vine tree branch has the same genetic structure of a vine tree. God preserves us so we can be like God. We should become like Jesus. Yes, we can be like God. It is about being and revolution of relationship. I am in you and you are in me. The revolution of being and relationship take place in us. We have become like Jesus.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:1, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children." The members of the glorious church will imitate God because they crucify themselves daily to become the pure and holy soul. The Ephesians demonstrate for us how to a church can be so glorious. "Imitate God!" This is scary.

Who is prophesying this? Zechariah says in 12:8, "In that day the Lord will defend the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord before them." I spoke on this in the exposition of Psalms. Our goal is not to become like David but to become like God. Zechariah 12:8 is such incredible prophecy. This refers to becoming one with God in the essence. In another word, we are living on earth, but not really on earth.

"Keep" in John chapter 17 is tereo in Greek. It means "making complete." It is like sowing a mustard seed and growing it to become a giant tree. It is written in aorist tense which means it is making something complete sometime in the past. By the pre-creation glory God keeps your life and complete becoming one in essence like God and Jesus are one. Isn't this the Lord's Prayer? God will complete what he started.

According to Ephesians chapter 1 God predestined us to be holy and blameless. It's His stubbornness. Since He started He will finish it. As we go through the doctrine of church we are caught with despair "how can I become like God? How can I imitate Him?" The hope we have is because He started it, so He will finish it up. Like He became a lump of love He will turn us into a lump of love. Let it be done unto us!

When we talk about salvation, we typically say that we are born again. It means "once more," it can also mean "from above." We are born from above! We are the same in essence with God. The Bible addresses frequently like in Hebrews 2:11a "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father." We are all from one Father. That's why "Jesus is not ashamed to call them brethren." Doesn't that drive you crazy? Why does God say that? Because we should experience the revolution of being and revolution of relationship and that's the fundamental life we are supposed to live. We are not of the world! However, what's the problem? We are in the world. It would be awesome to get saved to go to heaven, but how come we are still here on earth? We are here for the world!

Once the gospel enters our heart we naturally come to an understanding of the purpose of our life. How come you don't know it? That's because you are full of worldly standard. We have pride in our missions but it is not something to boast about. We are supposed to do that once the gospel enters our hearts. Who doesn't get involved in missions? Well, there are. They don't have the purpose of existence of church. Out of our annual revenue of 2 million dollars we spent 1 million on missions. Why do we spend so much on missions? Because we want to be proud of our church? No! Everyone is supposed to do that. The reason God called us is to choose the un-chosen souls.

We exist to reap the grains of God that are scattered over the world. Our ministry is to harvest the glorious people of God by establishing the same churches as Yulbang Church throughout the world. It is the same with you. Set your life in order and prepare yourself to go out to some corner in the world as a missionary. Wouldn't be better to receive the Kingdom of God as a glorious one when it comes? You don't want to hear questions "what did you do on earth? You made lots of money? Why did you spend so much of your life to gather

around rocks?" What are you going to say if you hear them? Isn't it true? Gold is everywhere on the road in heaven. You don't want to live your life for it! It is much better to harvest the souls.

Let's consider GIs in Korea. American soldiers come to Korea and they say, "We are not Korean! But, we are in Korea." Why are they in Korea? Because they say, "We are here for the Koreans!" So, they only eat American food even though they are living in Korea. They contend that they are under American jurisdiction which complicates legal matters into heated debate. Americans come to Korea and eat "Made in USA." What should Christians eat? "Made in Heaven!" Even Americans in Korea eat American food and the children of God are eating the earthly foods and they are so happy with it. Our attitude toward the things of this world is "if we do it, we do it. If we don't do it, we don't." It is not worthy of dying for. Let me tell you one more hurting word. You can't even tithe \$10,000 per month and why are you spending 90% of your energy in the world. 95% is more accurate. Why do you live like that? Pray! I am not sure how our church will turn out to be, but we only need two people to work. The rest should be jobless and work on their spirituality. Each person should make \$100 million, so two people would net \$200 M. That will suffice. Remember, we are not of the world, but we are in the world because we are for the world. God chose us to do that.

"I have hated Esau" means that God has chosen Jacob. God chose us to choose the un-chosen; we should be humble. When Israelites lost their purpose of life, they were cast out. It goes the same for today's churches and Christians. The loss of purpose of life results in cast out. Simple evangelization is not enough. We should be a light that shines His love. The life we live is important along with faith and being the righteous. We become righteous by our faith and live a life of the righteous. That's the doctrine of salvation we are supposed to live. Shine God's perfect love through you. Through your life and through your words deliver the light of God's love.

Now, let's turn our attention to the second point from verse 3 to 4. Malachi says that God has made Edomites desolate. The Lord is saying, "I have made Esau's mountains a desolation to complete the love that I have for you Israel." God continues to say in verse 3, "But I have hated Esau and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals and wilderness." "Desolation" refers to destruction.

The Edomites became weak fast during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. They lost the Petra to Nabateans in 5th Century B.C. They tumbled and became shepherding Idumeans. However, Edom says in verse 4, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins." Edomites lost the Petra around 5th Century but they continued to fight to reclaim it relentlessly until BC 312.

They should have known the reason for their demise. This is why I hate the "willful Korean." If God makes you fall headlong, then stay low. If God stops you, stop. If you continue to insist on your ways according to your will in stubbornness, the time will come for God to

cast you out.

That's what happens to Edomites. When Nabateans claimed the Petra from them, Edomites should have stayed low. Had they stayed low, they wouldn't have been destroyed. However, they were too eager to reclaim their prized fortress. "Why should we become desolate? We will rise up again and return to build up the ruins!" The Lord replies "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." When God tears down, He has a good reason. When God stumbles you, He has a good reason. This is God's love for us.

The reason God weakened the surrounding area of Petra was to buy some time to raise up the mighty nations in order for the gospel to spread out to the world. God did not strengthen the Petra so it might not be a stumbling block to the spread of the gospel. Soon, Messiah was going to be born to spread the gospel. God didn't want a mighty nation centered on the Petra to block the gospel. So, God devastated it. Nabateans destroyed the Petra in AD 105 and flattened the surrounding area. This is the work of God to prepare for the works of gospel. When we come across such history, we realize how much God works to prepare for the spread of gospel. There are several works of God that totally level to the point that it is obscure to our understanding.

In another word, there is nothing that God won't do to spread the gospel. There is nothing God won't do to love you. That's ahab. God can do anything to make His love complete. Nevertheless, the Israelites say, "Does God still love us?" So, that makes it over!

Malachi says in verse 5, "Your eyes will see this and you will say, 'The Lord be magnified beyond the border of Israel!'" Now, God is casting out Israel and moving over to Gentiles. The history began with Israel and moved out to the Gentiles according to Romans 9 – 11. We can say that the history is in the way to go back to Israel. The point is that God cast out Israel. In another word, God cast out the original branch. He chose another branch to re-choose Israel. Not only God chose the Gentiles but He chose us as well. We are the spiritual Jew. We should clearly understand our calling. God called us so that God would re-choose the cast out Israel and choose the un-chosen. Be humble! The purpose of our calling is clear. God desires to use us as the light of all nations and the light of His love.

God says in verse 11, "For 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." Four interpretations over this verse will be for next week. Believe the word of God "I have loved you" and God's amazing love is continuing. God scatters the whole world for His love.

Why does God allow the prosperity for the wicked? I spoke over this in the exposition of Habakkuk! It is because of the righteous. To love us and to perfect us there is nothing God wouldn't do. What happens to unbelievers who witnesses the wicked things if God is alive? However, if you see with your eyes of faith, then it is God's providence. Do you remember

the picture that won the Pulitzer award? An eagle was following a child waiting until he collapses to feed on him. The photographer who had taken the picture committed suicide. However, one who saw the picture realized “ah! This is where God is going to work,” and he went to that land. God’s providence brings forth suffering, adversity, and hardship to show us what we should do. There is nothing God cannot do to share His love through us.

First, God has loved us. The evidence of His love is God’s choice of Jacob. God chose Jacob to choose the un-chosen. The evidence is destruction of Edom. God leveled the whole surrounding area of the Petra to make it more inducible to spread the gospel. God does all things. Carefully discern the will of God. If God wills to humble us, be humble. If God says, “No,” it is no. “I think I should do this. Let’s rebuild the ruins!” That’s just your thought. When God lowers and destroys, He has reasons. The discernment of God’s time, place, and people are very important. Please do not insist against God’s will. If you try to force it against God’s will, you will pay the price. Being stubborn against God’s will results in your suffering.

Are you getting ready for the exposition of the Malachi? If you are not responding in repentance, you are not accepting the word of God “I have loved you.” The word about the restoration of worship comes through the Malachi. Let’s listen to Malachi’s message with holiness in life. Please pray that you will experience deep repentance through the Malachi. Ahab! That’s how much God loves you! “God, purify me so that I can receive Your love. Help me, oh God, to understand the amazing love of the Father through Malachi. You show us how you destroy the world and churn it out of your love for us; that’s grace. It is so painful not to receive Your love. Help us to receive Your love.”

The desperation for the new glory should rise up inside of you. The new glory of restoration of worship should take place through the Malachi in our Yulbang Church. Forget what has happened thus far. It doesn’t matter what you saw and what you did. Now, it is time to unify the word through the presence and the revelation. It is time for that.

God bless our worship to enter into new glory. Father God, help us to understand Your deep grace through the book of Malachi. Give us Your heart! The Spirit that came upon Malachi come upon us, so that we can understand the heart of the Father to receive the amazing love, ahab! Help us to understand the depth of Your love through the Malachi and break down the calloused souls. We are not receiving Your love because we are not standing properly before You. God, increase the excitement of Your wonderful love. You have chosen us to share Your love with the rest of the world. We know we can’t share Your love without first receiving Your love. God, fill us with Your amazing love, ahab!

6 . MALACHI (2)

1 : 6 - 11

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.

Malachi (2) 1:6-11 (3/2011)

The title of this message is "Where is My honor?" We began the exposition of Malachi last week and the Malachi consists of six discourses in which God asks a question and answers it. We covered first five verses the last time and its discourse was based on "I have loved you!" Israel arrogantly asked God "When have You loved us?" This technique is favored by rabbis of Israel in their teachings. They raise a question and then answer it. That's how God speaks in the Malachi.

The second discourse begins from 1:6 to 2:9. It addresses the problem of leaders' corruption. The leaders are priests. Priests were corrupted and offered the bread and sacrifices without discretion. In another word, they offered worship services without discretion. 2:1 – 9 is about the priests not listening to the voice of God. Priests are supposed to listen to the voice of God in their life but they do not listen to God's voice. In addition, they didn't glorify God in their life.

Today we will cover from 1:6 – 11. 1:12 – 14 are the repeat of 1:6 – 10 from a different angle. I will address the repeated part next week, so we are dividing the second discourse into two parts.

I addressed the matter of love the last time. The Hebrew word for love is typically hasad which refers to an ordinary love. The books of Malachi and Deuteronomy use a different word ahab for love. It is a family language and a covenantal language. The special meaning of the word is "choice."

The verse two "I have loved you" can be rendered as "I have chosen you." Why did God choose Jacob and not Esau? Because God wanted to choose Jacob in order to choose the unchosen Esau. Why did God choose Jacob first? It's God's providence. We can't know that. However, it is clear that God chose Jacob to choose the unchosen Esau.

The reason we became Christians is not to simply live as God's children on the earth. If that was the sole purpose, then there is no reason for us to live on earth. It would be happy to go to heaven soon. The question is why do we live on the earth? To choose the unchosen people through us! I addressed the gospel of John last week. We are not of the world but we are in the world because we are for the world. That's the reason American soldiers in Korea are not Koreans. However, they are in Korea. Why? For Korea! They only eat Made in USA in Korea. Therefore, you should eat the things of God even though you live on the earth.

We should live by God's provision like the exposition of Beatitude. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Why should we mourn? Because we live only by the provisions of God. We always mourn and desperately wait on God since we live by the early and late rain. You don't mourn because you live by your own efforts and take the things of earth. Wait for the things of God and desperately love Him alone.

I addressed the matter of choice/election. The election is not only for the Calvinists. I

am not talking about God's election of one and rejection of the other. The matter of choice hinges critically on the time. Choice is not a conclusion of future event. Choice is in the present time. The present time is not the three-dimensional-world we are living in. Anyhow, let's not get bogged down with this but move on. The event of God's love is giving up on His omniscience in order to choose His love. This is an amazing story. This is more dramatic than giving up 100 lives you have suppose you have 100 lives. God loves us so much He gives up on His omniscience. In order to love us God gave up His holiness and came on earth.

What we see from verse 6 to 14 is the corruption of leaders. Malachi addresses the corruption of the leaders and says in verse 6, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. And if I am a master, where is My respect...O priests you who despise My name?" Israelites reply "How have we disrespected You and despised You?" I think it is important to expound each verse in the Malachi. I am just not sure how long I will keep up. The point is that it is a matter of respect to God. In another word, they are not serving God well. It would be all right for the lay people to serve God not so well, but we are talking about the priests.

What the Lord addresses from verse 1 to 14 is about the worship. Priests are not worshipping God the way they are supposed to. I am at a loss with word. It is bad enough for a layman to fail to worship God, but the priests offer up worship service God does not receive. This is critical for pastors. As I live with God I notice that it is inspirational and easy to pray and worship. Everything is easy except one thing; learning the technique. Ever since I became a pastor, the religion started to slowly creep into me. Becoming a religious man is painful to me. You wouldn't know how much I gnash my teeth to break down my hardening self.

In my spirituality when I was in the base of the mountain, I climbed up fast. However, now that I am close to the peak each step I take forward is extremely difficult. It takes hours to reach the top of Mt. Everest even though you are only one meter away from the top. We should be renewed and changed daily; we shouldn't be hardened; techniques and methods should not affect our Christian walk. Like Paul told Timothy to let his progress be evident to all the members of the church everyone should see my progress. However, it is not easy for my progress to be evident to others on daily basis considering where I am. For those that have just begun the race not changing is unordinary. Please don't say, "Pastor, it is hard" when it has been only 1 year in your spirituality.

When a pastor gets stuck in a rut, he becomes apathetic and it is so easy for him to offer up hardening worship service. However, God does not receive the worship service from the unholy and impure soul of priests. The Israel's priests were so corrupted that they did things that the lay people even wouldn't do. First of all, it is a corruption of worship. Sunday worship service is the preparation to meet the Creator. Of course we can meet God through others like prayers and other worship services we have.

In verse 6 we have the word "honor" and "respect." Some words whether in Hebrew or Greek are repeated in the Bible to emphasize their importance. Honor, respect, and fear

are mentioned frequently in the short book of Malachi. We see the word twice in verse 6. Moreover, God says in 1:14b, "And My name is feared among the nations." We see the word "fear." "Reverence" is mentioned in 2:5 and "fear" is also seen in 3:5.

We want to take a note of three words of Hebrew. The first word is yare which means reverence. The second word is morah. Yare and morah basically have the same meaning, so we will treat them pretty much the same. The third word is kabad. In our text in verse 6 we have kabad rendered as "honor." Yare and kabad are important to us. The priests did not have a clear understanding of yare and kabad to honor God.

The first word at the beginning of verse 6 is kabad rendered as "honor" and the second word that comes after is morah rendered as "respect." "Fear" in verse 14 is yare. 2:5 is morah and 3:5 is yare. We have different words. Honor, respect, and fear all seem similar in Korean words, but they are all different. Let's find out the clear meaning of yare and kabad. The priests of Israel failed to understand the meaning of those words and to observe them in life.

Let's first look at the word yare. One theologian devoted his whole life to study the fear of God and his name is Bamberg(?). According to him yare is used to refer to the best sacrifice made for God. It is giving the most important thing to God. That's the meaning of yare. In short, Israel did not give the best to God. Malachi says in verse 8 that they presented the blind, the lame and sick for sacrifice. That's a mistake. We should present God the best regardless.

It is the same with worship service. You should offer up your soul in best condition as pure and holy to God. We shouldn't worship God superficially. From the theological perspective worship is entering into the holy of holy. If you don't enter the holy of holy, the worship becomes an entertainment. Regardless of how beautiful the sanctuary looks or how wonderful orchestra plays the instruments it is not a true worship unless you are pure by the confirmation of the holy blood of the Lord. Entering into the holy of holy is a scary thing. In a sense if you are not justified, you will die instantly. That's why I say, "Worship is a matter of life or death." Why church members do not change although they worship God? Because they don't go into the holy of holy; they just stroll around the court according to Isaiah. There is no change because they play in the front yard.

God promised to meet Israel in the mercy seat in the holy of holy. Jesus our Lord should become a propitiation for us providing His precious blood, so that we can meet God then and there. If that does not take place, then there is no change in soul. Worship that doesn't lead to an encounter with God is not a worship service. Whether you sing a song of praise or hear the words of God, if you don't have an encounter with God, that's not a worship service to you. The purpose of worship is not to commemorate God or cross, to comfort God, or to say, "Hi" to Him.

The sole purpose of worship is to encounter God who is seeking for worship service

full of spirit and truth. If you are not offering up the best worship to God in your purity and holiness, I am sorry to say that you are not encountering God but dying. Since the soul is dying, I have seen numerous people who worship God for decades and do not change. The problem may lie with the condition of their soul, but it can also lie with the level of worship in their respective churches. Regardless of the reason we can't say, "That's worship service."

You must have an encounter with God in your worship service. If you encounter Him, you are bound to change. Your life will surely change if you meet the President of your country for 52 weeks let alone meeting the Creator for 52 weeks. If we encounter God in worship service, our being will be absolutely revolutionized. How come we can't meet God? Because we don't know how to worship God properly. We should worship God with our purest and holiest, but God says Gentiles' worship is better than our worship. It is hurting God's heart so much. God is not crazy to receive our worship to begin with...

The reason we worship God is for our good. The lifestyle of meeting God in life is the only way to live; it is the blessing; how can we be blessed if God doesn't meet us through the worship service; how can we continue to live in this dangerous world; how can we use the power of God and wisdom given through the worship? This is yare. If you know the heart that we are supposed to offer up to God, you would prepare the whole week for the worship service on Sunday. Set your life apart from the world at least Saturday with piety and meditate on tomorrow's text. For example, Malachi 1:1 – 4. Purify yourself by reflecting upon your soul and set your heart to offer up the thrilling worship service.

Furthermore, you should prepare your offering throughout the week. You can see it as religious action, but it is not. When I address the treasure, we are not just addressing the treasure. God said that where your treasure is your heart is also there. What does that mean? Since Jesus is the treasure, we give God the best whether it is our offering, the condition of our soul, or prayer. The one that leads the congregational prayer should do so with pure and pious heart. If you are focused on God, you have the passion to give Him the best. Reversely, since you do not have the passion for God, you offer up like "You eat it." God responds "No, you eat it!" How can we offer up our worship to God without the purity and the determination to give Him the best?

Folks, try to set yourself apart from the rest throughout the week for the worship on the Lord's day. You will receive the blessings beginning in the elevator of the sanctuary or when you tie your shoe lace at home. If you live far from the church, please pray like this "God, bless me every time I come to worship You and let the fuel money be counted as offering to You." God counts all the time, so offer up the best! It is the same with your children. Let your best kid become a pastor!

Christian & Mission Alliance in America allows people whose G.P.A. is above 3.8 out of 4.0 to become a missionary. Anyone above 3.6 can become a pastor. I have inferiority complex with regard to this denomination, but they've got it right. I serve missionaries and

when I look upon them I have a sense of inferiority complex such as 'what a blessing to serve as missionaries with all the financial support.' I serve them because I have a calling to serve them. We should learn to offer up the best people who can later turn the world upside down as strong servants of God. That's yare.

If you have such attitude with regard to worship, you cannot help but to get blessed. How can you worship God without thirst for Him? How can you think about encountering God without sanctifying your soul? On the Lord's day your soul should be in the best condition. If you are not, then you can't endure our long worship service. The work of life is great on the Lord's day. My eyes open up at 2:00 a.m. in the morning because of my anticipation of the worship service 'how is God going to work in today's worship service?' Give your best! Give yare, the best worship and the best condition of your soul.

Give the best offering as well. D.L. Moody said that our wallet should repent. If you just say, "God, I love You" in words only, then you don't truly love God. If you really love God, the financial commitment would follow. I have shared this testimony before. One of the first batches of the ministers in our church was from a poor family. She worked hard for money and didn't spend any earning but saved it and gave all for the offering to God. That Sunday God worked so powerfully in the worship service, so she said to me, "God must like money!" I replied, "Now, you know!"

Kabad has several meanings. First, it means a burden, weight or heavy. In order to honor God the word of God should be heavy to us. We do not want to treat God lightly. How much room the word of God takes up in my life is important. If we believe it is the word of God, the immediate obedience should take place. This is kabad. In short, the leaders of Israel treated the word of God lightly. Therefore, they could not serve God properly. When you consider someone as light, can you respect him? Since you do not treat your senior pastor lightly, you try to give him the best things. How much more so for the Creator God? We should not treat God lightly! Put weight on His words! Be willing to risk your whole life upon the word of God. That's the only way we have to live, especially priests.

Malachi says in 2:2, "If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name," says the Lord of hosts, 'then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart.'" They don't listen to God's words. I address this to pastors and during the pastor's conference. What's pastoral ministry? It is paying attention to God and seeing how the wind blows. When you pay attention to God and see His will, then you will do well in your ministry. Instead of paying attention to God you pay attention to yourself and your wife; therefore, your ministry does not go well. Always put weight on the word of God and wholeheartly support it. What can you learn from me? I do anything if it is the will of God. If He speaks to me, I am willing to give everything and I am willing to die for it. That's what I expect of you in Yulbang Church. Kabad means burden and weight of God's word.

Second, kabad means priceless. It is joy to us. It is knowing how priceless the word of God is. Not only you put weight on God's word but you also consider it priceless. His word is not cheap; it is more precious than gold or silver according to Proverbs. God is a Person, so He blesses you when you consider it priceless.

This is the reason our Yulbang Church envisions to become a foundation of the Gospel's defense. Let us all have the willingness to die for the word of God. There is nothing more important than the word of Creator. Look at this generation! They worship God according to their desires. Too many people take the bait of little money to work on the Lord's day. They do that because the word of God is not precious to them. God blesses through the worship service on the Lord's day but they don't believe God when He says, "You shall have rest on the Lord's day." The word of God is priceless and it brings much joy to us. We don't force ourselves to devote to God; we do it out of joy.

Third, kabad means honor. It is treating the word of God honorably. It is about being proud of the word of God. The author of Deuteronomy calls those who receive God's word a god. We should have pride of having the word of God like "I am a man that hears the word of Creator!" There is nothing more we can be proud of than that. I was like that 19 years ago and I am still the same today about the word of God. My pride for the word of God was more than others. When someone asked me "are you willing to die for it," I answered "yes." I had the attitude of "since God said so, I will absolutely do it." We should have honor and glory of the word of God. Do you think I will easily compromise? Peter said that we become partakers of the divine nature. Author of Hebrews said that for both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father. So, He is not ashamed to call them brethren. We should have this pride. However, Israel lost this pride, so they carelessly served God.

Fourth, kabad means presence of awe/fear. I will later address shekinah, the presence God's glory. Kabad is the presence of awe/fear. If you fully understand kabad, you will not limit God in your life. I have said this before that human beings are about the same. They are not that much different from each other. Where does the difference of man's nobility lie on? It depends on who does not limit God! That's it! Whether you limit God or not determines the nobility of your life. If you know kabad, the presence of glory, you don't limit God in your life. The priests of Israel did things according to their will. They did not listen to the voice of God and thus limited God in their life.

Fifth, kabad means doxa, glory. NIV renders kabad as honor but Septuagint renders as glory or doxa in Greek. Jesus says in John 17:1, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You." What that means is that the intimacy of Jesus and God is given to us. What is that intimacy? The love! God and Jesus were so intimate that they became a lump of love. Likewise we should become a lump of love. It is the event of giving us His glory which He had before the creation. In short, kabad is the intimacy of God, love. It is similar to ahab. We don't serve God out of fear of Him, but voluntarily love Him with His amazing love we have received.

Let's keep this on our mind. The work of the Holy Spirit can vary, but two things are very clear. There is holiness and freedom. If there is no holiness and freedom, then that's not the work of the Holy Spirit. Where does freedom come from? It comes from love. You have desire to give more for your Father and you make more commitment because of His amazing love. Don't do things out of obligation. You don't have to do things with frown upon your face. Always do things with joy. Play instruments out of joy. Serve as a cell leader with joy. Praise God with joy. Joyfully cook and do laundry. Give your house with joy. In short, kabad is intimacy, the love. Once God's amazing love is full in you, you will be humble before Him. The tribune God is the spirit of humility. Holy Spirit exalts Jesus. Jesus glorifies the Father. It is a spirit that serves each other. If you are filled with the Spirit of God, you are bound to stay low. Exaltation with the trumpet sound is not the work of the Spirit of God but the devil. Once you are filled with the Spirit of God, you are bound to sink low. That's the meaning of kabad.

Yare is giving God the best. Offer up the worship service when you are the purest and holiest. When your soul is most prosperous and most beautiful on the Lord's day, offer your worship to God. Otherwise, you should come early and roll over in repentance. The preparation to meet the Creator shouldn't be that inarticulate. If you lose the spirituality of worship, the rest is meaningless.

I tell those who come to attend the leadership training in our church that they won't benefit much from it. Why? Because for us activating the spiritual gifts is not the goal. Our goal is to worship God on the Lord's day and live by the word of God from the worship service throughout the week and prepare for the explosion on Friday when we hold the leadership training. If you didn't properly worship God, then you can't do it. Without proper worship you can't pray. Without the prayer spiritual gifts won't do you any good. You can have things here and there out of balance, so the color is not beautiful. The soul lives on through the worship service which further results in the prayer full of life which also further leads to the ministry. When the worship is dead and, prayer is dead, and you still minister, that's probably not the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our church is so simple. We don't have anything and yet God amazingly works in our church. I believe it's possible because God Himself works. Where does God begin His work? God touches us through worship service and renews us. It begins with the inspirational worship filled with His grace. There is nothing more important than worship. God works through the worship service. Look at the missionary from Philippine! What have we done to help her as a church? Nothing! However, she is a living witness. I haven't seen any member that is in worst condition than her. So, anyone should be able to go to the missions. One goes to Bhutan, but the bottom line is we should build up the church of God regardless of conditions.

Next, we want to pay attention to the increasing frequency of the word 'name.' In verse 6 God says, "O priests who despise My name," and we see it again later in the same

verse. We also see it in verse 11 three times, verse 14, 2:2, 2:5, and 2:12. 2:12 doesn't directly mention name but it has the meaning of name. We continue to see the word 'name' throughout. The Hebrew word is shem. It is a significant word. "God has given us the name!" When we talk about the name, it signifies the presence of God. When God said, "I chose Shiloh to put my name there," it means that you can meet God in Shiloh. Shem refers to the presence of God.

Jesus says in John 17:6, "I manifested Your name to the men whom You gave me out of the world: they were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word." What does "I manifested Your name" mean? It has tremendous meaning. It means the Spirit of God who created the heaven and earth has started entering into our bodies through Jesus. Yes, the Spirit of God has begun to live in us through Jesus. Does this shock you? NO? But, it is an amazing word. This word turned me upside down 19 years ago. That's the reason I quit 15-year-long habit of smoking and I also quit drinking overnight. As soon as I had realized my body had been filled with the presence of God's glory, I couldn't put bad things into my body. In addition, I began to fast with gratitude. I am talking about the presence of God's name.

John says in John 1:14, "And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." The word 'dwelt' is the word for 'shekinah.' The shekinah glory! It means God has pitched the holy of holy inside us. God set up His holy of holy inside of His creation, us. God has given you the presence of glory of the tribune God. The only way to live now is not to limit them. Nothing more precious than this exists. Of course, you can study and do many things. However, doing those things without this is like engaging the battle field with water gun when you can fire machine gun.

In short, God is dwelling in you. A good way to put this is that the White House is now inside of you. Now, the shekinah glory of tribune God is upon you. When you do not limit this, the awesome revelation of God that moves the national and world histories rises up in you. The Holy Spirit does not dwell in the angels whereas the Holy Spirit indwells us exposing the revelations of heaven in us.

Paul says in Ephesians 3:10 that the church reveals all the wisdom to angels. We have one wonderful word remaining today. The time is coming that the angels will receive an awesome revelation in this worship service and will report to God. Isn't this the glory of the church? How is that possible? It is possible when we do not limit the shekinah glory in our life and live by Him. The name of God which is the glory of God indwells is because of Jesus.

According to the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah this is the reason we should become like God. Now, it is possible to speak like God, act like God, hear like God, and live like Him. That's the reason Paul says in Ephesians 5:1 to be imitators of God. How can a creature imitate God? How is that possible? But, it is possible! Because the glory of God came into us

we can live like God. I have addressed Zechariah 12:8 the last time. In that day the indwelling of the Holy Spirit takes place. In that day the feeble will become like whom? David! What will happen to David? He will become like God. It is possible now to partake in the divine nature through Jesus. God has given us the shekinah glory, the presence of God.

Therefore, the goal of our spirituality or Christian walk is not to be the best man. Absolutely not! You can learn all about that in your ethics class. Our goal is to live like God. Of course, our goal is to live like God; we can't become a self-existing God. However, God and we are essentially the same like the grape vine and its branch have the same genetic structure. Those that do not have the same essence can't go to heaven. Shem is the presence of God. Do not limit this! I mentioned earlier about kabad that if we continue to limit God in our life, we will fail to serve God properly.

This is the mistake of today's priests. "I can do it with my own strength!" This is contemporary church's teaching "work hard and it will happen." That's not gospel. I listen to people who have a great Christian life and they all say that they worked hard like "I served in the choir, in the cell group as a leader, etc. I worked so hard but I failed." How did that happen? They failed because they tried to do them on their own. Shem, the name, and the presence of God; this is incredible revelation.

God granted the presence of His glory to creatures like us through Jesus Christ. We should not limit this in our life. I did nothing for the last 19 years of my life except this. I did not limit God's presence in my life. I asked "God, how do I do this? What should I do? Where should I go? What makes you pleased?" That's all I did for 19 years. This sermon is the same. While I am reading the Bible, I have a question like "God, why is so and so like this?" Then, He gives me information with regard to the question.

Next, we have the word 'despised' in verse 6. 'Despise' is the antonym of honor or fear. The priests did not fear God. It is the antonym of kindness. They verbally abused and we will see this later on. Priests hurt God so much with their words. Malachi says in 2:17, "You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, 'How have we wearied Him?'" They injured God with their words. Despised means they did not listen to the word of God. We can see this in 2:2. Pleased is the antonym of despised. God is not pleased; it doesn't make God happy.

They did not consider the word of God and service to Him honorable. It is like "I somehow became a pastor!" They did not consider priesthood honorable. That's the reason God says in verse 6, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then 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?'"

Let's take a look at verse 7. What is the evidence of dishonor the Lord presents? He says, "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?'" There are many evidences but presenting defiled food to God is the major evidence. The im-

portant point is that the presenting defiled food to God is defiling God. This is a scary story, isn't it? How is that so? The food symbolizes the word of God. Defiling the word of God is also defiling Jesus because He is the word. We all should honor the name of God as in kabad and yare in our life; however, not doing so is directly defiling the Lord.

That's how Christians are insulting the name of God to the gentiles. They respond with "You believe in Jesus. I rather believe in my fists than believing in God." Some are more extreme. When they see people fighting, they say, "Why do you fight? Do you think this is a church?" That's because of many churches are fighting. God says in verse 10, "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar!" What is God saying? He is saying, "Quit ministry! Why are you in ministry?" The exposition on Malachi is suitable for the pastor's conference but anyhow believe that you are the priests.

They gave defiled food to God and it defiled the Lord. Thereafter they say, "The table of the Lord is to be despised." What does that mean? They are saying like, "Worship service is supposed to be mundane. The important thing is that I worship. Is there anything special to the worship service?" Therefore, the priests became so used to offer mediocre worship service. The key word is the defiled food they gave. When you enter into the sanctuary, you can see the Golden Lampstand on the left, the Table of Shewbread on the right, and the Altar of Incense in the front. They gave the defiled food and it means the food itself is defiled. It refers to the mixing of the word. God hates what is mixed but He loves what is pure. God doesn't even give a peek to a mixture of two.

I addressed in the exposition of Leviticus and Numbers that we shouldn't even weave a cloth with two different threads. Moreover, we shouldn't sow two different crops in the same row. Even the food shouldn't be eaten mixed up. The mixed marriage is prohibited. God hates adulteration. This is dangerous! How do we adulterate the word of God? Instead of holding on to the truth system a pastor preaches according to worldly principles, his ways, his intention, and his methods. That's the problem. "Jesus vaccine" corrupts the believers. Believers are vaccinated with partially dead Jesus, so when the real Jesus comes, He is rejected. This is the problem we are facing in contemporary churches. Do you know that God doesn't even pay attention to the Unification Church? He doesn't pay attention to Jung Myung Suk (well-known Korean cult leader).

The most painful thing for God is seeing a church of God, they say, but it gives defiled food. This is the fear that I have every time I walk up to the altar in my ministry. I ask God "Am I giving the right word before God? Am I feeding the word of God properly? Am I doing a good job as a matchmaker to graft them onto God?" I am a mentor to you temporarily and my job is to speedily train you to be my coworkers. That's the vision of the ministry. We don't want to grow our own branches; it only makes things worse. We should take the branches off as soon as we can and engraft it onto the original tree. In order to do that we cannot allow adulteration in the words of God we receive. There are so many people who have received

Jesus vaccine and they try so hard to engraft to Jesus but they can't do it.

This is the blessing on Yulbang Church. We hear it right and believe it right like the Galatians Church. This is the foundation of defense of gospel. Let us defend the gospel Paul defended with his life 2,000 years ago! This is so important. The problem with Laodicea Church was being lukewarm. How do you get the lukewarm water? Just don't heat it up and let it be. The filling of the Holy Spirit should personify the church. When you fall down in prayer, the filling of God should personify inside of you. It will give you a headache when Satan is personified in you. Let the anointing of God, His power, His integrity, and the filling be poured out to you.

How can we continue to fan the fire in us? By continuously putting the logs into the furnace! All we have to do is bearing the cross continuously. The fire will continue to burn. The fire can't continue if you don't supply the logs. In addition, how can we have lukewarm water? By mixing the cold water with hot water! All you have to do is mix the world with God! That's what priests did. Their half was filled with the world and the other half was filled with God. A believer should live by the standard of God. He can't live by two standards at the same time: the standard of the world and the standard of God. Too many people think they can live by both standards but that's not possible.

God and Baal cannot be mixed up; the light and the darkness cannot be mixed up. Why is your Christian walk painful? It is not difficult to live with God, but rather it is difficult because you mix God with the world. Living with God is so easy! God dislikes chaos. We should never present defiled food on the altar. Church members should pray for me. It is the same for you as well "God, don't let me eat the defiled food." Don't go to any place thinking you will receive blessings. Discern well!

How can the food be defiled? The problem is that the hand that gives the food is defiled. God says in verse 10b, "I am not pleased with you nor will I accept an offering from you." Nothing is wrong with the food but the hand that offers it is the problem. This is what bothers me. The water is clean but the water pipe is rusted; this is the problem. We should repent endlessly. There is nothing wrong with the word God given to me; however, the problem is that I am defiled. The defiled hand means the life is defiled. When I am defiled and have the clean word, will the clean word of God go forth from me? No! The perfect word of God is also defiled when it goes out of my mouth since I am defiled. We can never deceive God!

The mighty word of God was manifested in the beginning of the ministry. However, the church members wouldn't change. So, I asked God what the problem was and He said that He will show it to me. I saw the proclaimed word of God entering into church members along with spirit of deception. Why? Because I wasn't living according to the word I preached. It only looked and sounded good. That's the power that comes out of the life of a pastor. The spiritual power comes from the life you live. This is very important. No one can deceive the Holy Spirit.

The Lord of hosts speaks in verse 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?" What does that mean? Presenting the sacrifice itself is not the problem but the heart is. When Israelites are walking rightly with God, they present the sacrifice along with their life and heart to God. That's the reason a repentant sinner brings the best sheep he was raising, says, "I am a sinner" three times, and lay his hands on it. With sadness he cuts its stomach and the blood spills out everywhere and he sees the blood. God receives its blood and forgives his sin. Consequently, he determines not to sin again so his precious sheep he was raising would not be slaughtered again for his sin. However, when Israelites are corrupted, they present their sacrifices just like Gentiles do.

A sacrifice of Gentiles does not need to be presented with much heart or with the transparency of the holy life by the presenter. All they should do is like this "Hey, Baal! Take this and eat it well and do not behave capriciously. Send down the steady rain." When Israel is corrupted, they offer sacrifices like the Gentiles do "God, take this and do not behave capriciously." There is no offering of their life or heart. There is no determination! This is the worship service of corrupted Israel. God had no regard for Cain and for his offering but the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering in Genesis. God did not have regard for just Abel or his offering. God receives both the person and offering.

It is the same with the offering you bring. The reason an offering is precious is not because money itself is precious but your life is contained in it. It is not important how much offering you give. For God how much you sacrifice is important. If you totally have given your life, then that's the biggest offering. That's the reason Jesus said, "This poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury" when she put in two small copper coins. It applies to our church as well. I have never shared with our church members to give God much offering and much time out of left overs. I demand your life and I never say to give your left over to God. Here we see Israelites' worship that's identical to corrupted Gentiles' worship. Presenting a blind to God as offering means "God eat this and be satisfied." Consequently, God spoke through Isaiah, "You eat it because I am so sick of it now." This is the current address of Korean churches.

A certain associate pastor told me one day that he served in one church for 20 or 30 years but he was never blessed by a single message of the senior pastor. I thought it was peculiar that the senior pastor that could not bless or touch his heart through so many years of sermon. It was equally peculiar to me that the associate pastor stayed in that church for so long after all. That is peculiar. Fundamentally speaking, God does not want you to go to that church when your soul is dying like that. The reason you want to encounter God consistently in your life is because the word of God works as life in you. Most people receive life through the word of God in our worship service. That's why they are changing. Jesus said in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; but the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." The word of God must not accumulate as information of knowledge

in us but as life. In many circumstances the word of God is accumulated as information of knowledge in you because you have not met God, and you do not offer up a glorious and perfect worship to Him. If you have been attending church for over 20 years and hear a sermon on John chapter 15, you say, "John chapter 15 for today? Oh, the message is on the story of grapevine!" You fold your arm during the worship service. This happens because the word of God is accumulating as information in you.

The author of Leviticus says in 17:11, "For the life of flesh is in the blood," so the word of God becoming life to you means it is becoming blood in you. Jesus also says in John 15:3, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." When we hear the word of God, it shouldn't lead to the accumulation of the information of knowledge. The hearing of the word of God is the transfusion of the blood; therefore, you are purified resulting in a change. The members of a church change through the church in which the word of God works as life. The reason you do not change is because the word of God is accumulating as information of wisdom in you. That's why I say that we eat the word of God not hear it. The presentation of the defiled food on the altar by the priests of Israel people means that their life hasn't changed. They are not receiving the word of God as life. It is the same with us. If you are not receiving the word of God that comes through me as life to you, you have no reason to sit in the church worship.

Jaques Helleu (?) who is a famous socialist in France used to be a communist and one day he became a Christian. Before the conversion Jacques contended that in order to change a society, the system must be clear. In another word, his focus was on the system. After the conversion Jacques contended that the issue is not the system anymore but the heart. He therefore said that in order for Europe and France to change the heart must change. Upon the reception of Jesus into his heart Jacques cut down the communism, sent out its corpse, and said, "The Lord has come upon me in holiness." The President Mitterrand of France was influenced by Jacques and said that in order for Europe to change it needs Jesus. He went over to America and requested politicians and pastors to send 100,000 missionaries to Europe.

In order for a civilization to be established, it cannot have a moral corruption. Let's look at Korea. It is no longer about "prosperity." Please do not vote for a congressman who advocates "prosperity." Such advocate of prosperity has become a judgment against the greed of Korea as nation. The economy is being unfolded according to my prophecy. "Let's live in prosperity" is not what's important to us; it should be "let's live in right ways."

Let's turn our attention to verse 9 and 10. They do not rightly honor God, so God says in verse 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?" What does that mean? It means they lived according to their desire and now they ask for God's grace saying, "Please resolve our problem..." God's reply is "Do whatever you want. I don't need anything from you." The grace of God is extended to us when we develop a right relationship with God and serve Him

in the right ways. Without the development of right relationship with God your request for His mercy is pointless.

The Lord of hosts speaks in verse 10, "Oh that there were among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you nor will I accept an offering from you." God does not want their worship. It is so corrupted... God wants to see someone to shut down the church door. He is saying, "Priests, it is better to close down the church. Why are you speaking vain things in the worship service so you call?" Isn't this what God is saying to Korean churches today? God is saying that He is tired of such worship. God speaks through the Malachi but how important is the renewal of worship? It is not acceptable to come to worship without hunger and thirst starting next week. Sanctify yourself on Saturday and prepare your soul in the best condition to encounter God. Please don't come to church hurried and without any expectation. In addition, please don't be tardy!

The worship must be revived since it is corrupted. The Lord speaks in verse 11, "For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations." This is in line with verse 5 "The Lord be magnified beyond the border of Israel!" God is saying that you were the chosen people who were supposed to reveal God's glory in your life but you didn't; therefore, I will cast you off and go to the Gentiles. The abandonment of Israel rises at this point. God says, "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." Do not take it so seriously when it comes to the chosen. I am not saying it is not important. It should not end with the attitude "Since I am the chosen, I am fine..." God does not look to the future for the sake of His chosen and for the sake of His love for us. The relationship with God exists only in present moment. The verb in Exodus yada is eternal present tense. Likewise our encounter with God is eternal present. Relaxation over the fact that they were the chosen and the subsequent corruption of their faith led to God's abandonment. Consequently, God moved over to the Gentiles.

The verse 11 is important to us. The reason I chose today's text in our commissioning service of missionary is due to verse 11. This is the globalization of Christianity. There can be six interpretation of verse 11. I suppose others can have more than that but I am going for the six interpretations. In addition, this is the nucleus of missions in this church. Let's see how great this revelation is. First, it is the interpretation of the Roman Catholics. Their understanding and interpretation is that Roman Catholics will rise up everywhere. They perceived it as globalization of the Roman Catholics. When you receive the Bible with amen, it becomes yours. Deuteronomy 28:1 – 14 are the words of blessings given to Israel. However, if your people receive it, then it belongs to them. Verse 11 mentions the incense and that is why every catholic church has incense. This revelation became a foundation of Roman Catholic worship service.

Second, Israelites understood as the scattering all over the world as in Diaspora and they would worship in their own places. This also came true. Third, we have syncretic inter-

pretation which is irrelevant to us. It contends that the Gentiles will also burn incense. This interpretation contends that although you pray under the pine tree, God will still hear your prayer. Fourth, it is better for Gentiles to earnestly pray to their idol in their temple than for Israelites to present defiled foods to God. This is God's despair! The interpretation is like this "Instead of receiving the defiled worship from you I rather receive Gentiles' earnest worship they offer up."

Fifth, we have the eschatological interpretation. Since the coming of God's kingdom is imminent, the religion of God will be globalized. This is also being fulfilled. Finally, this is the interpretation of perspective of mission which is what we desire. This word is mentioned throughout the Bible such as Psalm 10:1, 113:3, Isaiah 45:6, and 59:19. This interpretation is that the Yahweh religion will be globalized. The Catholic Church has 1,500 years of mission history; the Protestant church has 200 years of mission history. What is the result? The Catholic Church doesn't have problems. We can argue how well they are doing or not, but there is no conflict between mission agency and churches. Only the protestant churches have endless conflicts with mission agency in their short 200 years of mission history. What does this mean to us?

The mission and church are divided. The position of mission agency is that churches don't have discipleship training, Bible study, or anything worthwhile. Consequently, they employed a tactic and went over to churches and said, "We are not a church!" "We want to do missions. Can you support us with resources like people and so on?" They receive the support from churches and they turn their back on them. The position of churches is like "This is like entrusting a fish to a cat! Don't give it to them." Why? Because from churches standpoint they take the good young people from the church and put them under their mission agency. Therefore, one important main stream in the Christian world is that the mission agency becomes a denomination.

This is true for Korea and for the rest of the world. This is the separation of church and mission. UBF has also become a mission agency, hasn't it? Other mission agencies have become like denominations. Intercp mission agency is a good example. They are planting their own churches. This only happens in protestant church and it does not happen in Roman Catholic. Roman Catholics have their own mission agencies like Jesuits, Dominique, Francisco, and Saint Bernard Missions. There are many mission organizations within Roman Catholic, but they do not have any conflict with the church. That's because the Pope has the absolute authority and they are all obedient to him.

Hans Qum (?) is a Father (priest) and a world famous theologian. One day he wrote a favorable article about the protestants; consequently, the Roman Catholic church expelled him and suspended him from teaching. They told him not to write articles anymore. When a scholar can't write, it is like a singer that can't sing. The Protestants were joyful over this and several seminaries reached out to him "Come and join our church." His reply was "The church is right here. Where can I go from here?" So, he has stayed low and hasn't done much

since. This is the ecclesiology. Therefore, I support the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church. It is biblical! The ecclesiology of Yulbang Church is similar to Roman Catholics. Even if you are kicked on your shin, you should say, "The church is right here. Where can I go from here?" That's the church doctrine. The separation of missions and church takes place because of lack of strong ecclesiology.

We have a pope in Protestant church. The number is about 30,000 accounting the number of denominations. Churches are destroyed as much as they do mission works. I have read the biographies of missionaries. They spend 10% energy on reading the Bible, 20% for teaching and preaching, 10% for raising children, and 50% for fighting with other missionaries. That's true. This is the enemy of Protestant missions. One Korean denomination, Hapdong, sent out 7,000 or 8,000 missionaries to the world. Do you think that's a lot? Other nations call us the second leading missionary sent nation. Please follow me carefully.

I received a mission strategy to combine the mission organizations and churches from the Lord 19 years ago. I found out that an idea to unify the mission organizations and church came out of Florida about 40 years ago. Johannes Blauw wrote *The Missionary Nature of the Church*. In his book, Johannes suggested to unify the divided church and mission organization. How does that work? A church becomes a missionary and plants a church. Did Antioch Church do the mission works through mission organization? Antioch Church became a missionary and sent out missionaries to plant other churches. This is the mission strategy.

Korean churches began to send out missionaries in 1970s about 7,000 or 8,000. UBF sent out 1,500 missionaries, so we have total of 10,000 missionaries serving around the globe. One thing to point out is that we have good missionaries but they are very few in number. 7,000 or 8,000 missionaries are not that many. Our vision is to send out 300,000 missionaries. It is churches functioning as missionaries in the fields planting more churches. There are 50,000 churches in Korea. If we have 50,000 churches, how many missionaries are we supposed to have? 50,000 missionaries! The Yulbang Church in Siheung becomes a Pope taking the responsibility of financial support, helping the missionaries to establish churches throughout the world and planting more churches on top of them. It is possible to send out 1 million missionaries. However, the issue is not how many we send out.

Soon we will start up a Bible college in Cambodia and start training the locals. Each person will become a church and out of that another church emerges. This continues in Singapore and Taiwan at the same time. In short, 300,000 missionaries can be raised up rather quickly. How is it possible for one church to commission 300,000 missionaries? It is possible if a church sends them out. A church plants another church. I ask the missionaries in the field "Raise up the Yulbang Church there and raise up another Yulbang Church. I will provide all the support." The Yulbang Church in Siheung becomes a Pope, provides all the supports, and controls the affairs. We have a missionary from Philippine and they say that Korean missionaries are building so many churches buildings there. However, they are all empty. Why? Because they did the mission works and didn't build the true church.

Verse 11 is a tremendous revelation. We absolutely will not send missionaries but we will send the servants who will establish the church. The commission of 300,000 missionaries by 2030 is easily achievable. There are two issues though. First, how are we going to train up to the highest standard? Second, God must provide all our financial needs. For us people are important and God's plans are critical. You should go through the training thoroughly. Go out to the all the corners of the world and we will be the headquarter to monitor the mission fields, start on Bible college in the fields, raise up the leaders, ordain them, and establish the church.

Let us serve God faithfully! Please remember kabad and yare. We can't help but be willing to die for the word of God. God has given us His presence, the glory of shekinah. Our life should not limit God. Become pure and holy soul, so you can go out to all nations as great missionaries who will raise up the church of God. May God bless you according to Ephesians 4:12 that you would be a missionary, a minister, a man of authority of God's word, a worshipper, and a contributor being equipped to serve God in His ministry ready to go out anytime!

7 . MALACHI (3)

1 : 12 - 2 : 9

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.

1."And now this admonition is for you, O priests.

2.If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me.

3."Because of you I will rebuke your descendants ; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it.

4.And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD Almighty.

5."My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name.

6.True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.

7."For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction--because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty.

8.But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the LORD Almighty.

9."So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law."

Malachi (3) 1:12-2:9 (9/2011)

This is the second part of message entitled "Where is My honor?" The book of Malachi consists of six disputes asking and answering questions back and forth. The literary form of each book in the Bible is very important to understand it. For example, the gospel of Mark was written in novel form, so you need to know that to understand the thesis of Mark. If not, you would mistakenly say that it is a book of miracle. This is the why the literary style of each book in the Bible is important. The understanding of six disputes of Malachi is therefore important to discover the thesis of Malachi.

In the first session we looked at the first dispute from 1:1 to 1:5. God said, "I have loved you," but Israelites are disputing it "when have you loved us?" This is a story of love. The typical Hebrew word for love is *hasad* but in Malachi and Deuteronomy the authors use *ahab*. *Ahab* is a key word. It is a family word which means it is used to describe the love of family. The love of family is not dependent upon how much or how well one is loved or not. It is rather a sacrificial love. *Ahab* in the same sense refers to covenantal love. It is different from a man's contract which is agreed based upon each party's benefit and it can easily be broken once it is no longer beneficial to either party. This is the covenant! God absolutely chose you and loved you. He will never break the covenant from His side. However, you may turn you back on His covenant and not accept His love. He will not break His covenant. God is unending and everlasting love. His love endures forever; it is everlasting love.

The second dispute is from 1:6 to 2:9. The theme is found in verse 6 "Where is the honor due me?" Israel shouts back to the Lord, "How have we shown contempt for your name?" The theme of honor is carried out all the way to 2:9. We stopped at verse 11 the last time because it was too long and verses 6 – 11 are repeated from verse 12. In addition, there is another reason Israel does not honor God and it is found beginning in 2:1. It should be addressed in the priest's perspective. Of course it is still the story of priest in verse 6 and on, but we should address it from the priest's perspective. That's the reason we divided in into two parts.

We addressed the theme of honor since the last time. The word, honor, is repeated twice in verse 6. The word, fear, is found in 1:14 and it is the same as honor. *Awe* is another word for honor in 3:5. Korean language uses the same word for those words but Hebrew is different slightly in its meaning. The word, honor, in verse 6 is *kabod*. The second word for honor is *mora* in Hebrew. We also see another word *yara* which comes little bit later. *Mora* and *yara* are almost identical in meaning. We can treat them as the same word and our emphasis lies on *kabod*.

Bamberg studied the honor of God for his whole life. He said that *yara* means giving the best to God. We should give what is the best to God. When it comes to worship, we should worship God when the condition of our soul is the best. If your spirit is full, it doesn't matter what the pastor says in worship or how the worship progresses.

When I first became a Christian, my job was a buyer for my company. I travelled over 80 nations around the world. When I went to a certain place in weekend, the first thing I did was to search for a church on Saturday to ensure I can attend a church on Sunday. I always did that. I also had morning service in my hotel room. If I stayed with a coworker in the same room, I worshipped God in the bathroom alone every day. I always sought out a place of worship everywhere I went. Europe is one of the better places because you can easily find a church whereas Casablanca is not a good place because there is no church. Casablanca is the capital of Morocco by the way. It only has mosques. The amazing thing is I went to a mosque to worship God. I said, "God, I proclaim this mosque as Your tabernacle." The incredible thing is that God touched me there in the mosque. The presence of God filled that place. The Muslims in the mosque didn't receive any blessings from their god because of me. Please do not misunderstand me. If your spirit is so full, you can sense the presence of God anywhere in the world. Why? Because Jehovah is everywhere in the whole universe.

Worship is to be offered when your spirit is in the best condition. I am sure there are some people who have been broken down this week in the world. That's the reason our worship is not blessed. Furthermore, this worship service will continue for three more hours, so they can't sit still and their eyes will turn red. That's because they didn't properly offer up their week of time to God. Let alone a week if you stay holy just on Saturday alone and long for the Sunday worship, you will be blessed today. Condition yourself to be the best and offer up your worship to God.

Material is also the same. Giving lots of money is not the point; it is how much you sacrifice for God. Therefore, it is said that God loves money. Please listen well! If you listen while sleeping, you will say that Pastor Kim said, "God loves money!" This is how precious God treats the worship you express from the bottom of your heart and how everything is offered up to God. The Gentiles' worship is like a bribe "Take this and give us good rain!" When Israelites are corrupted, their worship becomes just like Gentiles' worship service. In the book of Isaiah he portrays the anger coming out of God's heart "You eat it. I don't receive such worship from anyone." Why? Because they are ignorant to offer up what's the most precious to God!

Consider this. If you know and offer up the most precious things to God and He receives them from you, imagine how much God would bless you! God wants you to offer up what's most precious not because He needs them but because He wants to bless you through it. God is not in need of something because He lacks it. This is yara. I addressed kabod earlier. First, it means heavy burden. We shouldn't treat the word of God lightly. Second, it means precious. We should treat the word of God as the most precious thing. Third, it means honor. Do not compromise with the world thoughtlessly. That's not how we should live our life. Fourth, it means doxa which means the glory. Finally, it means sham which is the name. It refers to the presence of God. If you go to Yulbang Church, you can meet Pastor Minho Kim. When God puts His name in a place, it means you can meet Him there.

Like John 1:14 the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, God fills us, His creature with the presence of glory. That's called shekinah glory. John says in 17:6 that God gave His name to us through Jesus. This means that God poured out the Spirit of Creator upon creatures through Jesus. How great is this glory! The blessed life is not limiting His glory. Let us not limit the glory of tribune God in our life. When the President of America visits your home, it becomes the White House. That's incredible! The indwelling presence of tribune God in you means the glory of God who is the Lord of nations and the world comes upon you. According to Ephesians 3:10 the angels do not have the Spirit of God. However, we do have His Spirit who reveals God's revelation to us. Even today, the angels learn from us and watch what revelation we have in our worship service. The worship that is full of God's honor, glory and unblemished holiness transforms itself into a glorious church further teaching even angels. Angels say, "Wow, that's what happened?" They are blessed through the worship service and make a report to God. This is true. You can ask God when you see Him in heaven.

Verses 12 through 14 are the repetition of the same thing we have from verses 6 to 10. They are almost identical. They are little bit different. I don't need to cover this if they are the same. However, since they are a bit different, I will address them.

The characteristic of book of Malachi is that the exposition is verse by verse. This means you need to pray. This book is difficult for me to preach personally. I am an apostle, so can you imagine how painful it is for me to expound on the book of prophets? The reason behind that is the office of apostle was established after Jesus had been crucified. However, the office of prophet had been even before the time of Jesus. Jesus embraced every pain, so an apostle speaks elegantly whereas a prophet knows no elegance. I am personally blessed by the books of prophets but it is painful for me.

Malachi speaks in verse 12 "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.'" Have you heard this before? It is similar to 1:7. What does this verse mean? We say this quite often in our church "Korean churches are corrupted!" It is saying like "Pastors are corrupted! Worship is entertainment!" That's what Malachi is saying. He says, "The Lord's table is defiled" which means that worship is corrupted, a church is corrupted, and a pastor is corrupted. We should be careful of one thing when we speak in this manner. Do not exclude yourself when you say so and so are corrupted. That's the first danger. Every corruption begins with you and me.

We are serving Korean churches and other churches in the world. Are we serving them because we are truly righteous, pure, clean, and perfect? Is God proclaiming the corruption of Korean churches and their pastors through the words of prophets and through us? We are also corrupted with them. Their pain is our pain; our pain is their pain. We do not speak to outsiders, non-believers, about such filths and corruptions like "hey, the church is corrupted." We do not say that to them. We are proclaiming it within us, within the children of God, and within the church. The reason for that is because I am also responsible for the

corruptions of church in this generation. If I had more integrity, if I had prayed more for them, and if I had proclaimed more truthful words to them, it wouldn't have happened. Whenever I think about Korean churches, it hurts me. I truly desire not to do this, but God compels me to serve the pastors. One pastor conference I desire to serve in is with such an advertisement "Only the senior pastors of bigger than 10,000 members can come." That's what I really want to do. Why? Because that's where the corruption began. It hurts my heart. Why? Because I did not serve them well and I wasn't properly equipped... The understanding that all corruptions started with me is necessary.

Daniel in chapter 9 also lifts up a petition filing his nation's corruption as his corruption. Prophets always prophesy about their nation Israel in that manner and they all die. Why? Because they want to bear the responsibility. This is the reason I am scared of books of prophets and I don't like them. Let us remember that the corruption began with us, especially Yulbang Church. I sound like I am righteous and I am a man of integrity, but that's not true. We have responsibility as a church of this generation and a Christian of this time. Without this understanding of responsibility we simply say, "Churches are all corrupted," then we have a problem. If you do, you will truly be corrupted. Is our church a complete church? No! We are merely moving forward to completion and willing to die for the word of God. The problem is that there are not too many churches like us. In another word, we are not special or spectacular in any way. We are living a Christian life that is ordinary and normal. So many people are not doing it, so we look special. However, in reality that's not true. Rather, our pain is that we can't embrace more of them because we are not more complete. Please remember to include yourself when you say, "Church is corrupted. Worship is corrupted and pastors are corrupted." That's the reason we wrestle with it so much. As much as we embrace Korean churches we become dirty. As much as we embrace the world we become dirty as well. Our struggle is to continue to embrace them and at the same time not to become dirty. That's the reason we focus on the word of God and prayer. We wrestle so much to become a church that's willing to die for the word. Let us remember that we are all included when we make such statements.

Another caution is that everyone is corrupted but you consider yourself all right. Such attitude can kill you. For example, David was once corrupted, but you think "I am ok. Pastors are corrupted, so I am all right. Even pastors don't pray, so I am all right." Why is that dangerous? None of us are willing to die for David. Are you willing to bet your life for my sake? If your senior pastor tells you to die, will you die for him? If he tells you to go to hell, will you go to hell? You shouldn't risk your life for me! You should be willing to die for Jesus. In short, a sense of spiritual relief in terms of "everyone is corrupted so my corruption is all right" becomes problematic. Corrupted spiritual pride can be a problem!

This is important to both you and me. One of the goals I have in my training is not turning you into my man. This is an important goal in ministry; it is not making my man/group. If you become my man, you can't go to heaven. I will not turn you into my man no

matter what I do to you.

There was Pastor Billy Graham in England and he was an influential man for some time. One day he became a homosexual and ran away from his ministry. Ironically, he led a pastors' conference over piety in Australia and 6,000 pastors attended that seminar. When these pastors found out what had happened with Pastor Billy Graham of England, they all said, "How could this happen?" That's what's happening in Korea. It is just more frequent.

I had a difficult time in the city of Junju when I visited. There is this certain pastor in Kimpo leading some Holy Spirit seminar and he charges \$5,000. Many people fell in love with it. I also went to attend the seminar because someone highly recommended it. When I went in, I could immediately see sexual immorality and greed in him. Next thing I heard was that he ran away to Japan with his secretary along with 2 million dollars. I am thinking that pastors have a lot of money. Where does a pastor come up with \$5,000? How can anyone pay that much money to attend a seminar? I don't even charge 50 cents. Come to think of it I spend money for people to attend the seminar. I feed them well and provide a cozy accommodation. Zoe Ministry is good! Going back to the story I was leading a revival meeting in Junju and pastors who had fallen in love with the Holy Spirit seminar came to the meeting. They were greatly disappointed. They seemed to have made up their mind not to be blessed in the meeting. They were thinking in their mind that we are same as the disappointing Holy Spirit seminar "those involved in Holy Spirit ministry are the same people." Those pastors willed to die for this scandalous pastor. That's what happens to anyone who is willing to die for a man.

A.W. Tozer once said something like this. A man must meet a Christian in order to become a Christian. In order for us to be led to God we must go through a man. We don't go God by ourselves just because God says come or go. This is the reason one must be grafted to a Christian for a while and begin the process of encountering God. Is anyone here walked to this church without anyone sharing gospel with you at all? Has anyone here come by yourself, believe God by yourself, encounter Him by yourself, and sit in this church by yourself? Raise your hand if that's your case. I don't think we have anyone like that. I don't think we have anyone who came to this church without hearing the gospel before. If there is, he/she would be a great person.

Jesus said, "I am the vine and you are the branch." Twigs grow off the big branches. We shouldn't be involved in twig ministry. More twigs you have the branch will be torn. In the fastest manner break the twigs and engraft it to the original tree or just remove them. If we engage in twig ministry, we will get ourselves in big trouble. Don't let your church members fall in love with your personality or philosophy. Yes, pastor's personality is important but we shouldn't use it alone to minister the members. Church members will mature and the pastor's personality will eventually block them like a cork in a bottle. The time of burst will come. I have seen many churches like that. A senior pastor retires from the church after 30, 40 years of ministry. Immediately, it splits into 7 or 8 churches. That happened because

the senior pastor blocked off the church members like a cork stopper. My point is that you should leave me as soon as possible and be engrafted to the original tree of Jesus. If you don't, you and I both will die. If you have decided not to grow in this church, you have to make another decision either you repent and grow speedily or leave this church. Please choose between the two. If you don't grow and stay here, nothing will be more miserable than that. God is miserable. I am miserable and you are also miserable. Steady and timely growth before God is critical!

What's the greatness of Paul? According to Acts 20:30 – 32 Paul invited the elders of Ephesus in Miletus and had farewell with them since he was destined to travel to Jerusalem and eventually onto Rome. They shared the final moment together in Miletus. Paul was praying and sharing with them and said something interesting in verse 30. He said, "Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them." Paul is warning the elders that many false prophets will rise up and deceive the members of the church to a point they will follow them. Paul further said in verse 31, "So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears." Paul also said in verse 32, "Now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace..." What does it mean? Paul never committed the church members to his philosophy or his personality in his ministry in Ephesus and other cities. He only committed them to God and to the word of God. This is Paul's greatness. He never committed them to his philosophy or personality. Paul did not allow his church members to take a root in him. It is obvious for powerless pastors like me to say, "They are not committed to me." However, Paul went to the third heaven and he had tremendous knowledge and power. Nevertheless, Paul never committed people to himself. He knew what was important. This is his greatness!

Timothy is another good example. Paul was his spiritual father and he was a mentor. Paul matured Timothy and led him to take his root in Jesus. Finally, Paul made Timothy his partner in ministry. A senior pastor is sometimes like a father to certain people and other times he is like a mentor. That's only for a while. Eventually I want you to become my ministry partner. This is how both of us will live. I don't want you to put your neck on the block over my prayer for you, over the ministry I ask you to get involved, or over anything from me. Please don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that you look down on your pastor. When you become a coservant in ministry, both of us will appreciate each other more than before. One of the goals we have through cell group ministry is to serve other souls and understand how precious and great it is to teach other souls. Through them you can understand the heart of the pastor. Only then you can become a coservant.

Please don't let other people take up a root in you. One who allows others to take up a root in him is called a guru. Gurus caused much trouble in India. Their characteristic is making their followers totally rely on them and taking advantage of their weaknesses. That's how they lead others. They portray themselves as perfect. That's not the right way. Let's take a look at Apostle Paul. He runs away from the city of Thessalonica by letting down on

the basket from the top. If I were Paul, I would not tell others like “hey, I preached the gospel in Thessalonica!” It would be too embarrassing for me to tell others. However, we find Paul sharing such an embarrassing episode “I fled for my life riding down the basket from the city wall.” Paul reveals his weakness. In addition, while Paul was speaking about the third heaven, he veered away from it. Why? Because he didn’t want to stumble others over it.

Someone like me should be careful. I have a high chance of becoming a guru. Therefore, I ask you to please remind me of this danger. How do you do this? By becoming a coservant with me as soon as you can. How long will you go through my training? Some of you have been going through my training for 5 years and some 7 years already. If you are trained properly, you should be able to plant a church after three and half years. Yes, three and half years are sufficient. Ministers from Yulbang Church are training pastors in Daegu area well. I think those ministers can start planting a church. Some quick learners among disciples planted a church only after 6 months. The original disciples like Peter who followed Jesus from the very beginning took three and half years to plant a church whereas some quick disciples took only 6 months. This leads me to believe that staying in my church over 7 years is too long and it seems to be a problem. Church members who have been here for over 7 years will start planting churches tomorrow. I think we should commission them to mission fields.

This is Paul’s greatness. He doesn’t allow others to stumble over him. He trains them quickly and engrafts them onto Jesus. The will of God is not making people like Paul. His will is to raise up people who are even greater than Paul. Even Jesus said, “If you believe in Me, you will do even greater things than Me.” Jesus’ goal was to raise up people who will do greater work than Him. My goal is the same. Why would I want to raise up the same people like me in my ministry in Yulbang Church? The reason I am serving the pastors in Zoe Ministry is to raise up pastors who are greater than me. That’s my goal and I have no personal interest in this at all. I am a matchmaker matching you up with Jesus. I would like to be able to call you “coservant” as soon as I can.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:21 – 22, “So, then no more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future – all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.” Paul says that you are of Christ. The reason Paul mentions the name of Paul, Apollos, or Cephas is to point out that we are all matchmakers. “You are of Christ!” Paul knew something! God cannot help but to love him. When a man possesses someone else’s soul, he becomes a devil. A man cannot possess anyone’s soul. Only God can touch souls. That’s the reason Apostle John teaches us to do all things through anointing including teaching.

One thing I hold highly in my ministry is that I don’t do things but allow the Holy Spirit to do them. Do all things through the Holy Spirit. The first issue is that you don’t do things as much as you can help it. I shared this message through the Lord’s Prayer that I still pray “God, help me that I don’t raise up my own men. Break down my kingdom! Cut down my

honor and lift up Your name alone." This is the first and foremost prayer. Do you know how much God acknowledges Paul? Paul said that he had not received revelation about virgins but God tells him "Paul, write your own thoughts over them in the Bible." God acknowledged Paul so much to write his own opinion in the Bible. Why? Because Paul had not raised up his own men and led them to take up a root in God. Paul honored only God and lifted Him up alone in his ministry.

It goes the same for me and the cell group leaders as well. Please don't let your cell members stumble over you. It is integral to lead them to take up a root in Jesus. Consequently, as the number of coservants increase in this church we will be healthier. Our church will also become more powerful proportionally. This is the reason I cast out those who have been by my side for too long. I send out sister Yumi to Bhutan and Pastor Lee to Chunahn. When our church members mature, they should get ready to leave. Please do not think "I will live with you Pastor Kim forever in this church." You can stay if you want but everyone has to leave eventually.

Koreans tend to entrust everything to one who becomes a channel to reveal spiritual world to them. This is really dangerous! If you entrust him all things, factions will emerge. In addition, you will develop tendency to not acknowledge different things from us. This further makes you arrogant. This is what happened to our ministers in church. Everything began with me and it ends with me. All they are aware of is just me. Therefore, they don't acknowledge others. They are narrow! If you grow and mature in that manner taking up your root in God alone, you will treat pastors as precious being. Those who have been relying on me much will easily fall or stumble when I make a mistake.

All the mountains whether they are big or small must be flattened before God. Every mountain that is higher than God is abominable to Him. Let's become like Gideon who said, "My family and I won't become your king. Only Jehovah is the King!" Let God be our King. When we say, "Pastors in this generation are corrupted! Churches are corrupted! Worship is corrupted," remember it begins with us. The dangerous mindset of "So and so are also corrupted, so my corruption is ok." We are the ones that are willing to die for Jesus Christ. In another word, there is no reason for us to stumble over men. Many people do not go to church. I ask them what's the reason? They say, "It is because of so and so deacon in a church. He/she stumbled me." I say, "That's great!" Let him/her keep stumbling you until the end. Why do you stumble over man? Why are you willing to die for a human being? There is no reason whatsoever to die for a human being! If you are willing to die for Jesus Christ, you have no reason to stumble over man. God says, "You have placed defiled food on My altar by saying that the Lord's table is contemptible." In short, you pretend you have not been corrupted and you are willing to die for men; therefore, you become someone who doesn't need the presence of God in your life. That's why God says that you have shown contempt for My name.

Malachi repeats "Lord Almighty" throughout such as verse 13 (NASV Lord of hosts). When you hear "Lord Almighty" and when He comes to you, be careful. When God says,

“Lord Almighty,” it means you are dead now. When you have a right relationship with God, He never calls Himself “Lord Almighty.” When your father comes back home from work, does he ever say, “Father Almighty is back”? It is the same. When you have a right relationship with God, God refers Himself as the Son of Man or I am your lover and so on. “Lord Almighty” means you are finished.

Malachi speaks in verse 13, “And you say, ‘What a burden!’ and you sniff at it contemptuously, says the Lord Almighty.” What are they sniffing at? They are sniffing at honoring God. It means worship and Christian life become a burden. “What a burden” means things become a heavy burden. Yes, the worship becomes a burden, prayer becomes a burden, and offering to God becomes a burden. Christian walk is on a wrong track. As you know well God doesn’t force us to do things. Isaiah chapter one and Malachi 1:8 address the offering. Do you really think God wants you to give such offering because God is suffering from lack? God receives worship from us on our behalf and He rejoices because of love. However, Israelites give offering against their will. If you live a Christian life against your will, it is over. If you sense your Christian walk is tangled with the web of responsibility or obligation, repent immediately and be restored. If you can’t repent, just lay down your Christian life. You feel that you should have a right Christian walk since you want to be blessed. If you do it out of responsibility and do it against your will, it is even worse. If you sense any obligation, repent as soon as you can so you can live full of joy before God.

If you have a right relationship with God, you will be anxious to give offering to God. Brother Oh drives six hours from Goheung to come to worship in our church every Sunday. I went down there once and it was a long drive. A sister also drives from Daejun (which is about 3 hours away) every Sunday. If they were forced to do that against their will, do you think they can do it? No! God is pleased with those who have a voluntary heart! Don’t let your Christian life be a burden to you. Is there anyone who asks God to discount tithe? Do you say, “God, it is difficult to make a living. Should I give tithe? How about discounting it just five percent?” Please don’t ask me this question with discount! If you have a complaint about tithe, please do it to God not me. Oh, you can complain this to me “Pastor, how come worship service is so long? Three and half are too long.” I will gladly release you another church. If you do not come with a willful heart for the worship service, you will have a tough time in our church. I think there are some people here who are experiencing this right now. God just told me there are three people. I suspect you are thinking in your heart “This pastor can really talk. How come he keeps on talking like that?” It will surprise you even more once we worship for 5 hours. Burden can’t move us forward.

We should have a voluntary heart before God. When we have a fervor of amazing grace, everything is joyful. Prayer becomes joyful and everything else. Burden reveals the problems of our Christian life. If you sense burden, heaviness, and tiresome, something is not right. Living with God should be joyful. There are some of you who are joyful of living in the world. Why? Because you’ve got so used to living in the world and it raised the inclination of

enjoying the world. Likewise if you are joyful of living with God, the worship is fun and giving to God is also fun. Amen!

Malachi speaks, "You sniff at it contemptuously." Sniffing mans disdain. It refers to cheap grace. For example, it is an attitude of "God has to forgive me since I have repented. Won't He bless us since we have worshipped Him? How come I suffer financially when I have given tithe?" It is ridiculing God. It is like "God, you do your job!" I have repented and your job is to forgive me. This is cheap grace. It is inviting God to smite self.

The most exemplary repentance we find through both Testaments is the king of Nineveh in book of Jonah. Let's take a look at the king of Nineveh's repentance. When Jonah came to preach the gospel to him, he first stood up from his throne. That's significant! It means to kick away his self-centered life. The biggest reason you can't repent is because you are sitting on the throne of your soul. You cannot see yourself if you are sitting on your throne. You can never see your wickedness. You should get off your self-centered throne and immediately exit. This is the first and foremost step of king of Nineveh's deep repentance. Break away from your self-centeredness. If you don't break away from your self-centeredness, you will remain to be a savage forever. I shared this story in the exposition of the Lord's Prayer. When the humanity had been living under geocentrism instead of heliocentrism, they were deceived by Aristotle and remained as uncivilized for 1,500 years. However, when humanity accepted Copernicus' heliocentrism shifting from earth-centered to sun-centered solar system, they could transcend the earth. It is the same principle. If you live in your throne which is self-centered lifestyle, you will continue to remain uncivilized. The king of Nineveh broke out of his throne.

Next, he tore his clothes. Tearing off the clothes is a symbol of "I won't live like this anymore." He, then, put on a sackcloth. Sackcloth is not an expensive cloth like now. It was made with black wool at that time. It means "I am as black as this wool." He was confessing to God "I am so black."

Next, the king sat down in the dust. It means "I am worse than this dust." The important thing is not only he did this but he also made every living creature within the wall of Nineveh to repent.

I want you to notice his attitude. He said, "Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." What does that mean? God should punish us and kill us, but perhaps if God is merciful, he may forgive us. This is an example of a broken heart. The king knew how to offer up a broken heart. Isn't this the foundation of worship? According to Psalm 119 Psalmist confesses that his soul is consumed with longing for God's law. He longed for the word of God so much that his soul was consumed. It is the broken heart. His soul was broken up. This is the same with everyone. You should come to God with the mourning heart. Please don't come with an attitude like "Let's see if I should worship Him today." Even when it comes to prayer instead of "let's see if prayer works,"

come with “God, without Your grace I can’t go on.” That’s the broken heart we should bring before God. The right mindset of repentance is “If God’s mercy still remains, he will forgive me.” However, sniffing at it means “God, this is your job! Forgive and give me the seal of your forgiveness.” That’s what it means.

Next, I would like to address “When you bring injured animals.” The Hebrew word is gazal. It refers to an animal that has been torn by a wild animal. Exodus 23:31 and Jeremiah 7:10 echo not to eat an animal torn by a wild beast. The wicked Israelites are offering this dead animal torn by a wild beast to God. God said that even man shouldn’t eat it and the Israelites are offering it up to God. They are asking for trouble. God never says to give offering out of your leftovers. The precious offering is giving what you have sacrificed for God. It is not giving out of leftover after you spend everything you wanted to. If you give with an attitude of “Should I give some money to God?” or “I should keep up paying my fees,” God will not receive it. Please do not give time to God out of your leftover time. What God requires is your life, so you should give your life up to Him. Who taught you to give time out of leftover? It is shameful to say to change your offering life. Malachi is also offended “Should I teach them the fundamentals?” Malachi is teaching tithe to Israelites. This is how corrupted the Israelites were. Please do not make pastors to say or preach, “Pray, worship, or give tithe.” The first thing you do when you get your salary from work is taking offering money aside. Take tithe, thanksgiving, building fund, and mission fund first and give them to God. Please do not give out of your leftover. “I will pray since I have much time on hand.” That’s not it! “I will worship since I have lots of free time.” That’s not the way. This is what gazal means. The money you make honestly with your sweat and blood deserves to be an offering to God. That’s what I mean by “giving your life to God.” When you give your life in such a manner, God is pleased.

Malachi continues to address “crippled and diseased animals.” It simply means giving useless things to God. We should give the best condition of our spirit to God. Long time ago people used to comfort high school seniors who were rejected from the universities by saying “Just go to Bible College!” Yes, unfortunately, there were some people like that. We should let the smartest and purest of our family become a pastor. Israelites were not honoring God.

God curses in verse 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.” When you make a vow to God, you have to offer up a male animal whether it is a lamb or goat according to Leviticus 22:18 – 20. However, Israelites in the Malachi didn’t offer the male animal. They just gave whatever was available or convenient. We shouldn’t live our Christian walk out of our convenience but according to the word of God. In addition, they shouldn’t have given the blemished animal but they did. They gave according to their desire out of convenience. Furthermore, vow must be kept. Our vow moves God. We used to have many people whose new born baby was about to die, they prayed “God, I offer her to you so please let her live.” When she becomes healthy and grows up strong, they deny their vow. Whenever we make

a vow, we must follow through with it. Hannah had made a vow and she kept it. Consequently, God raised up a great prophet called Samuel who brought an era to an end.

God said, "Cursed is the cheat ... who vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord." Israelites did not keep the vow they had made. We have to keep the things/words we are supposed to keep before God. It doesn't have to be the formal vow. God was angry because they were not faithful to Him. God cursed them and said, "For I am a great king." It means He qualifies to do so. God further said, "And my name is to be feared among the nations." What does this mean? Israelites were supposed to reveal honor and respect to God before all nations. Since they failed to do so, God would move to Gentiles' and become their king.

This is significant to us. It is true God has given us a great vision and glory but if we don't keep them faithfully and prostrate ourselves before God, they will be shifted to other nations. That's right! If we don't honor God, our vision will be moved to other nation. Your blessings have been predetermined; however, if you don't honor or respect God, it is over. This is the mistake Israelites were making in their service to God.

Now, we see the curse on the priests beginning in chapter 2. Of course Malachi spoke in 1:6 "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name." The second discourse begins with the focus on the priests. We can interpret the priests as the pastors in this age but since we are all royal priest, it applies to all of us. Nevertheless, Malachi is focusing on the pastors.

The curse on the priests is found from verse 1 to 3. Let's look at verse 2 "If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name, I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me." We find two reasons for the curse in verse 2. The first reason is their disobedience. This is pretty simple but they let it grow to be this curse. The priests must listen to the voice of God. Listening to the voice of God is so important and yet Korean churches accuse those who hear the voice of God as heresy. Who is the real heresy? I don't mind becoming a heresy as long as I am not cursed by God. I will listen to the voice of God. Although they accuse me as heresy, I will continue to hear the voice of God. Avoiding God's curse is much wiser than avoiding their accusation. The Almighty God says, "If you don't listen to Me..."

I covered Listening to the Voice of God for seven weeks and said that hearing the voice of God is basic. However, how can it be such a great curse? It is because evil begins out of it. You suffer greatly in your life because you don't listen to the voice of God and do things according to your ways, your will and your thoughts. Anyone who ignores God in his life cannot turn out to be well. The curse of not listening to the voice of God advocates that everyone must hear the voice of God. God is not cursing people because He enjoys doing that. The reason God does that is because hearing His voice is the foundation and most important in life. Every evil stems out of it. This is the reason the foundation of spiritual training in our church is focusing on God.

There are many reasons you don't hear the voice of God; however, the primary reason is because you are focused on things that act as substitute to God's voice. You can't hear the voice of the Holy Spirit because you are focused on hearing the sounds of this world and you are exposed to the noisy sounds of evil spirits. You can't hear what God wants to do. If you are not mindful of God's voice, you will naturally be mindful of other things. In addition, since you are mindful of other things, you can't hear the voice of God. You cannot escape out of evil spirits because you can't hear God. The evil slowly creeps into you: the lust of the flesh and the lust of your eyes. The intrinsic wickedness and extrinsic wickedness coming into you are so full that you live by the life of the beast and by the boastful pride of life. Paul said in Philippians 3:8, "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ." The surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus should extract every false knowledge. That's the most important thing in our spirituality. The secret of extracting the poison is not removing the poison itself but it is naturally extracted when you accept the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus. I addressed this in the exposition of Galatians. It is hearing it right and believing it right. You can't believe in the right way unless you hear it right in the first place. This is Paul's great revelation; hear it right and believe it right! Receiving the Holy Spirit and carrying out the power of the Holy Spirit should be done within "hear it right and believe it right." This is a wonderful revelation. The Scripture has the same flow throughout. If you don't hear from God, you are cursed. Why? Even though God does not curse you, you will curse yourself in the course of your life. How so? Only the things of God are perfect. Only the things of God are glorious. Only the things of God bless us. When you don't hear them, the curse is already upon you. Furthermore, we should live in the light. Only when you are in the light, you can avoid things. You step all over the dirty things like trash and feces because you are in darkness. In short, not hearing the voice of God is the curse.

What else is curse? God continues through Malachi "If you do not set your heart to honor my name, I will curse you." Korean text has two sentences but in Greek (and English) text there is only one sentence. God is making a point that you do not set your heart to honor my name. In another word, you do not give everything to honor my name. The duty of the priest is to set and give his heart to honor God's name. That's the essence of life. You who are royal priest should pour out your heart to honor God's name and more so for the pastors. We should set our heart to pour everything into honoring God's name. That's the only thing we should do.

What does "honor my name" mean? Jesus said in John 17:1, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." Glory is restoration of the intimacy with God. As a pastor, as a priest, and as a believer we are supposed to maintain our intimacy with God. There is no other way to live. This is so true to pastors like me. I try to read His face all the time. It is not the best description... If we lose our intimacy with God, we will be cursed. Whenever we breakaway from God, a time of deficiency will come. This is abso-

lute. We are not talking about possibility, but the absolute. It will absolutely happen. Yes, if we are separated from God, we will absolutely experience deficiency. This is the reason we should preserve our intimacy with God. This is where the weary life comes out of. Psalmist says in 107:10 – 11, “Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.” The Bible teaches us the only reason for the weary life is the lost intimacy with God. This is simple and straight forward; however, this is the biggest curse on anyone from God’s perspective.

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray “Hallowed be Thy name.” Lift up only Your name and let my name fall on the ground. “Thy Kingdom come!” Help me not to raise up my own men and my own kingdom. Only Your kingdom be prosperous. “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Let the will of the Father be done and don’t let my will be done. This is how we glorify/honor God. When my will dies out, my things die out, and only God is built up, I become complete. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and He will add all these things unto you.

Not listening to the word of God. This is a simple topic to address and yet it is so terrifying. How can a pastor not hear the voice of God and pastor the congregation? I don’t understand why people find hearing the voice of God bizarre. I want the seminarians in our church to keep this in their mind. It is all right to be accused of heresy. Just don’t get cursed by God. People have come up with some strange theology. .. Set your heart to honor God with all your strength for the glorious presence of God. We live for the intimacy of God. Enoch walked with God and had sons and daughters according to Genesis 5:22. Having children is important. It means walking with God in every aspect of life. Therefore, God took him away to heaven not seeing death.

God continues his curse “I will curse your blessings.” This is terrifying. God blesses in Deuteronomy 28:1 – 14 and He also curses 41 times from verse 15 in the same chapter. The blessings from verses 1 – 14 are turned into 41 curses. Beings that are supposed to live by the blessings of God are now cursed. Do you think their life will turn out well? I don’t mind becoming a heresy; I will listen to the voice of God. I will, in addition, honor God’s name.

Now we see the details of the curse beginning in verse 3 “Because of you I will rebuke your descendants.” The first curse is rebuking the descendants. The Hebrew word for descendants is zera. It means seeds which refer to descendants. In another word, God will cut off the descendants. Pastors have a tough job. What is so tough? When you become a professional in your field, people look up to you. For example, when a lawyer does a good job of defending his clients in the court of law, everyone looks up to him. When a surgeon operates well on his patients, everyone looks up to him. However, it is not so true for pastors. When a pastor delivers good messages, does that make him a good pastor? No! He must be a good preacher and his life should back up what he preaches. His personality should also back it up. Everything must be perfect. Well, he doesn’t have to be perfect but he must reach

a certain standard.

Let's take a look at the qualification of a bishop in 1 Timothy. Are those qualifications attainable for a man? A bishop must be blameless. I mean he shouldn't lack in any area. This is the reason I keep telling the pastors "Don't pastor if you don't have the calling!" Because just like Paul said that God changed someone like him who was the chief sinner and strengthened him. I am also the same. I have changed so much compared to who I was 19 years ago. I was so different 19 years ago and look at the changes. This was not my will. God did it because He had called me. I am not sure how much further I will change. It took 19 years to be who I am now and I can't imagine myself another 19 years later. This is possible because I believe God who empowered me will continue to shape me. This is the calling.

It is the same with you. If you don't understand the calling to Yulbang Church, it will be painful for you. As soon as you confirm God's calling to Yulbang Church everything will start falling in place. If you have a calling to this church, you are bound to change within the spiritual system of Yulbang Church. Check out the members of this church and see how many of them have changed so much beginning with Mr. Choo, Mr. Oh, and the elder. If you have the calling to this church, you will change as long as stay put. When I read 1 Timothy, I feel like I am suffocating with pressure "How can I pastor?" The key is I don't do it. Since God is the One who called me, I don't do it on my own. He predestined us according to Ephesians chapter 1. God made up His mind to turn you into holy and blameless. He will absolutely do it. If God is going to do it, I wish He does it fast instead of having us wait for long.

"Because of you I will rebuke your descendants." God speaks the same thing in Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. 'Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.'" God rejects you and your children. This is why being a pastor is so challenging. If I mess up in my pastoral ministry, even my kids will be cursed. Whenever I address this, I lose my motivation for ministry. God should just say that He will curse the pastors. He scares us with curses on the children.

"Descendants" also have another meaning. It refers to the fruits of harvest. What God says is that there will be no payment for the labor. In our cases, there will be no payment for the pastoral ministry. Of course we are not in ministry for any payment or reward. However, our children should turn out well through our ministry receiving plentiful grace from God and joyfully living with God. Your life plunges head first and your face is so dark because you mess up in your pastoral ministry. The pastors who have no grace of God all look dark in their faces whereas the faces of servants of God who hear the voice of God and honor Him sparkle. Some look so dark and they seem to be well on their way to death like the icteric or the jaundiced.

"Descendants" also means amputating an arm. It refers to removal of authority, power and spiritual gifts. In another word, you would pastor without power. Since you do not hear

His voice and honor Him, your ministry has no power. Aren't we grateful in Yulbang Church? All powers of God are revealed and are working. The revelation of His power is not so important but when it comes to the presence of God, His presence is always revealed in His ways. It includes miracles, signs and wonders. If they are not revealed, then something is not right. That means the word is being accumulated as the information of knowledge. When word of God is built up in a church as life, the authority of word is bound to be revealed. Our church's focus is not on healing but such power is revealed in our church because of presence of God. "I will amputate your arm!" This is the curse on the priests.

Now, let's turn our attention on verses 4 through 6. This is the covenant of Levites. God says in verse 4, "And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue." What is this admonition? It is hearing the voice of God and setting the heart to honor His name. The reason God uses the word "admonition" instead of "word" is to emphasize His point. In book of John God uses the word "logos" in earlier chapters and in 12:50 He uses the word "command." Jesus said, "I know that his command leads to eternal life." Command is a deuteronomical word. In another word Jesus also accepted Deuteronomy as command "God's command is eternal life." Eternal life is God's command and His command is eternal life. Malachi uses a similar word "admonition." The goal of listening to the voice of God and setting your heart to honor God is to preserve the covenant of Levites.

In verse 5 the covenant of Levites is of life and peace. In short, the covenant God established with Levites is the covenant of life and peace. It begs a question, "What is the covenant of life and peace?" Do we see this in Bible? No, we don't see this in Pentateuch. We encounter a story in Numbers 25:12. When Israelites invited Gentile women for adultery, Phineas rose up and pierced both man and woman with his spear. It pleased God whom said, "Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him." Phineas killed people and received the covenant of peace. That's what we see but this is not linked to our discussion.

Yes, the covenant of life and peace is not mentioned in Pentateuch but there are other documents in OT that warrant our attention such as DT document. These documents recorded Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. How did the scholars name them? They just went DT, DT1, DT2 and so on. According to these documents we encounter "priest of Levites" Thus, we see blessings of Levites beginning in Numbers 33:8. Jeremiah 33:26 also brings up levitical priest. We see these in several other places. We don't see the covenant of Levites but we encounter levitical priest in Deuteronomy through DT document. It proves that they are not totally unrelated.

Let's turn our attention to Numbers 16:40. Do you notice the priest named Eleazar collects the bronze censers brought by those who had been burned up and hammers them out to overlay the altar? During the time of Numbers the priest in line of Eleazar were qualified to burn incense before the Lord. However, God says in Ezekiel 44:15, "But the priests, who are Levites and descendants of Zadok and who faithfully carried out the duties of my

sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood." Do you notice now we have priests in the line of Zadok? What is the significance of them? The descendants of Zadok are priests of southern affiliation Judah. The northern affiliation is of the descendants of Abiathar. The descendants of Eleazar are priests of northern affiliation. This issue is vital to determine the authorship of the OT covering 600 years. The conclusion is a group of Ezra scribes. This group edited the OT when they were about to finish canonization of the OT. They used DT document, DT1, DT2 and P document in their editorial work. The Jeremiah affiliation was removed in the canonization process and the Ezra affiliation edited the OT. In the latter half of OT the priests in line of Zadok who are of southern affiliation offered the sacrifices. The Old Testament which spreads for 2,600 years were edited by Ezra scribes. That's what we have been reading to this day.

I shared this with our theologians in America that the winner of history, Romans, canonized the New Testament. Many Hebrew scriptures related to book of James were omitted. We should search for them and study them. The key is that Ezra priests canonized the Bible for 2,600 years. The job of our theologians is to research the omitted books from the northern affiliation, the descendants of Abiathar. I just reveal on the outside and the theologians fill the inside. That's what they are paid for.

The important issue is going back to the covenant of life and peace which is mentioned in verse 5. The covenant of life and peace refers to maintenance of life, preservation of life, and multiplication of life. I have spoken of covenant earlier. The important point is that covenant is different from contract. Covenant refers to God's unilateral choice over us and unilateral love upon us. It cannot be broken by God; it can only be broken when we reject it. The covenant of life and peace brings peace to us individually and corporately when we are continuing our relationship with God. Breaking this covenant is like rejecting God or His presence which is immediately followed by deficiency. In another word, Levites can only exist in their relationship with God. As soon as they break this covenant they are worthless and nothing. It is the same with you. Whatever you do you are meaningful only when you are in right relationship with God. The covenant relationship is child – parent relationship with God, life relationship and eternal – life relationship. This is only what's meaningful to us. When this covenant is broken off, whatever you do is useless and valueless. It doesn't matter how much money you make or how many degrees you earn. Levites are only meaningful within the covenant of God.

I am echoing the teaching of John. The way of God's man is receiving Jesus who is endlessly coming to us as in book of John. Otherwise, you immediately enter into standard of judgment. This is the reason I use expression "Salvation is tension!" Receiving Jesus who comes to us all the time is our only way to live with God. Amen! God is saying "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace" from the same perspective.

God further says, "And I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered

me and stood in awe of my name." The purpose of covenant of life and peace with God is for reverence. In another word, if you forget/lose the covenant of life and peace with God, you can't revere God. Reverence in Hebrew is kabod. It is esteeming God with utmost respect and treasuring Him. When you treasure Him and give Him the very best, what happens to you as a giver? God will also treasure you. He will esteem you with utmost respect in return. For example, suppose I have so precious water that costs over a million dollar and I give it to my wife. To whom does joy belong to? The joy belongs to the giver. Do you think my wife will drink this precious water all by herself? She will probably tell me "Honey, why don't you drink it with me?" When you give God your very best, does God just receive it and say, "Thank you"? God will say, "Come, share it with me!" Who demonstrated this in Bible? David did. David looking down in the direction of a pond in Philistine said, "Who will get the water from the pond?" Two of his soldiers immediately went over to get the water disregarding their life. When they safely brought water to David, he simply poured it out on the ground saying, "This is their life." When God receives the best from you, how deeply will He be moved? David would never forget those men. "Now, you belong to me!" It is the same. Without reverence toward God, you cannot live out your life the way it is supposed to.

According to Proverbs the reward of reverence to God is life and peace. What is the reward of life and peace that serve God? On your left hand you have a warrior and on your right hand you have riches and glory. One who reveres/fears God is the blessed life. The purpose of the covenant of life and peace with Levites is to revere/fear God. "He revered and stood in awe of my name." Reverence/fear means treasuring the presence of God.

So, what happens to Levites when they revere God? God gives them His authority on their lips according to verses 6 and 7. The saying "The children of God live by their lips/mouth" comes out of this. We would love to hear "If you revere Me, I will increase your wealth. If you revere Me, I will bless you to be successful in your career." However, our good Lord gave us the best "I will put My authority on your lips." In another word, it will be done according to your words. I will choose this! The children of God live by their lips/mouth. You can have the authority of mouth. You shall have this authority as long as you revere God in your covenant of life and peace with God.

Malachi speaks in verse 6, "True instruction was in his mouth." Priests! True instruction is in your mouth! This is scary and tremendous! In another word, out of his mouth comes nothing but the truth. Truth is the only standard you can choose in all generations. Priests should have this. This concept is also found in book of Ephesians. The most important training in terms of raising up a glorious church is the training of words. Priests and members of the church should have the power of proclamation of God's words. Why? Because they have the truth. Whatever you speak becomes a law. How terrifying is this authority? They have the true instruction which becomes the standard of all choice. The truth compels us, our willingness, to die for it. This is a blessing given to Christians. You should know this authority. "True authority was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips." Of course, since he

has truth, there can be no unrighteousness. He doesn't speak anything false at all.

Now, do you understand why we are defending the truth of church and we are willing to die for the truth? A church should intercede for the priest that only the truth comes out of his mouth. When you pray for me, please pray that nothing but the truth comes out of my mouth. I expounded on 1 Timothy that a church must become a defender of the truth and a spiritual gymnasium. Let us all become excellent spiritual athletes. "True instruction was in his mouth." Can you imagine if nothing but the truth comes out of your mouth, how incredible works will be done through your mouth?

Malachi continues in verse 6, "He walked with me in peace and uprightness." When you live by the truth, your only choice in life is choosing the word of God. Therefore, you who choose the word of God naturally walk with God. How can a man who doesn't live by God's word walk with Him? Living by truth leads to walking with God. How does he walk with Him? He walks with Him in peace and uprightness. Peace is shalom that's fulfilled in the right relationship with God. It is daily glory of victory. Now, let's look at uprightness. God's word is upright. There is nothing that is upright beside the truth. God knows you and you know God. The relationship is knowing each other, communicating to each other, and experiencing each other. For example, Pastor Kim and Mr. Choo have an upright relationship. It means they don't have any secrets between them. The upright relationship between God and you means that there is no hidden secret. It is like what God says in Amos 3:7, "Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets."

Malachi speaks "He turned many from sin." The true instruction brings forth life. In short, it turns many people from sin. If the true instruction is alive and well in churches, it would be unusual for the church members not to change. Whenever a church possesses the true instruction, souls will live, life will be full, and people will change. A church that has members who have been there for 10 or 20 years and have not changed, it has a problem. The truth is dead in that church. A church full of vigor of truth will also be full of life. It will turn many from sin. This is the mouth of priests.

Let's continue with verse 7 "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge." What does that mean? First, it is guarding the truth. It is treasuring the truth. It is placing the highest value on the truth. A church should be willing to die for the truth. Second, it means preserving its purity, so we wouldn't compromise with the world and we would not be infected by it. We should preserve it so the truth itself is the purity of God. It is preserving it pure. Third, we have the responsibility to hand the truth over to the next generation. Since the truth is the only thing every generation can choose, we should pass it down to them. The next generation does the same to the following generation. This is our responsibility. This is what it means to guard the truth.

Therefore, Malachi says, "And from his mouth men should seek instruction." People do not seek the word of God from what is not the truth. The truth comes out of his mouth.

It is asking “What shall I do in this situation?” and then waiting for the word to come out of the mouth. Whenever you come and see me, you come seeking for the word coming out of my mouth. Hardly anyone comes to just to see my face. People seek instruction from his mouth. This is a scary saying... In short, when we say “The truth is coming out of his mouth,” it means the word of God is coming out of his mouth. Matthew says in 4:4, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” In another word, your mouth is Gods’ mouth. The mouth of priest is the same as the mouth of God.

I lift up this prayer all the time “God, give me the sound of heaven. Entrust me the word of authority of Your throne. God, when I open my mouth, may Your mouth be opened and let the river of living water flow out.” My mouth doesn’t belong to me; it belongs to God. The revelation is important to me. I don’t speak according to my thoughts and my ways. God says the same thing in Jeremiah chapter 1:9b – 10, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.” The mouth of a prophet is the mouth of God. Malachi teaches us that the mouth of priest is the mouth of God. Whenever a pastor opens his mouth, he should speak the words of God. God has given to the pastors and churches the spiritual authority that not a single word will fall on the ground.

Malachi continues, “Because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty.” Since out of his mouth comes the word of God and whenever he opens his mouth, God’s mouth opens up, they call him the messenger of God. This is why he is called a man of God. It is not just for pastors. Since you are also a priest, you have such authority of word. All the church members have the authority of proclamation of God’s word according to Ephesians. It is not the word itself. This authority comes from revering God, developing, persevering, growing the life, hearing God’s word and honoring/glorifying Him. This authority comes from walking with God every moment and from revealing God through your whole progression of life. Be grateful for the authority of blessing He has given us. I am not a fan of “You will have wealth if you fear God.” I love to hear “I will give you the authority of mouth when you fear Me!” just like Jeremiah to whom God said, “Through you I will uproot and tear down nations and kingdoms, destroy and overthrow, and to build and to plant.” Through the word of God this world is changed. The power that uproots, tears, destroys, overthrows, builds, and plants comes from the authority of mouth. This is why we say that Christians live by their mouth.

Finally, they have violated the covenant with Levi. Priests are supposed to live like that according to the covenant fundamentally speaking; however, they could not keep the covenant in their life. They broke the covenant. Malachi speaks in verse 8, “But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi.” They have left from the way. The way refers to listening to God and honoring Him. Priests were supposed to live according to the way, but they have left from that way. What’s the consequence? Malachi continues in verse 9, “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but

have shown partiality in matters of the law.”

“By your teaching you have caused many to stumble” has a couple of meanings. First, it refers to priests who stumbles men with their knowledge. Jesus said in John 6 that His words are life. When the word of God, truth, is proclaimed, that word is accumulated as life in us. However, today’s words are accumulated as information in us. Since words become information and lead to knowledge, they have no power to revive the souls. After you say, “Hamburger,” you just show them just the menu instead of serving them the hamburger. When you feed people hamburger, it fills life (energy) in them. However, you only say, “Hamburger” and don’t give them. That’s why they eat you, pastors. We don’t want to feed our people with information of knowledge and information of word. The characteristic of our church is that the word is accumulated as life. Let it continue to be so. It is said, “The life is in blood.” So, when you eat the word right, it becomes flesh and blood.

Second, why have they broken the covenant? They turned from the way. This is the indication of separation of word of God from their life. They did not obey the word of God which further led them to show partiality to the people. “Partiality” means they only taught and preached word to people they liked. God says in Micah 3:5, “As for the prophets who lead my people astray, if one feeds them, they proclaim ‘peace’; if he does not, they prepare to wage war against them.” In another word, you bless those who treat you well with gifts and things but you curse those who don’t. Partiality means you preach the word of God paying too much attention to people. For example, what if I preach this message, Elder Michael stumbles over it and he stop tithing? What if I preach this message, Mr. Smith falls into temptation and stop offering thanksgiving? We should proclaim that we will die if we do any of these: your own ministry philosophy, your thoughts, your thoughts for your own benefit, preaching the word within your philosophy. You don’t want to pay too much attention to people. This is how the covenant of Levites was broken. This message is for the priests and you are the priest. This word is for you.

Let’s summarize it! Revisit verse 12 in chapter 1. Remember the corruption always begins with you. We say these things because we are responsible for Korean churches and other churches in the world. However, we are included in this and the corruption of church is my corruption since I live in this generation. Please remember that. In addition, do not be willing to die for a man. I want you to get off me as soon as you can and lay down your root in Jesus. I want you to become my partner/coservant. This is the most important point in today’s message. Please mature! Next is verse 13 which emphasizes on burden. The evidence of such treatment is found in your desire for cheap grace by offering up injured, crippled and diseased animals. Verse 14 is about vow. We should give God what is acceptable. Next, we see the curse of priest. They don’t listen to God and they don’t honor Him resulting in God’s judgment of rebuking their descendants. There are three meanings.

I left out 2:3 “I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it.” God is going to extract all the feces from the intestines of sacrificed

animals and rub their faces with it. In another word, they are going to be ashamed. They tout with "Is that man a pastor?" The value of pastors is dropped to the same value of feces. It hurts my heart. There is none as precious as pastors and priests but they become as cheap as feces because they live that way. As a result, they are carried off with feces on their faces. The time will come and God will cut them out. Next, we see the covenant of life and peace. The Levites can only exist within the right relationship with God. The purpose of this covenant is for the reverence. Furthermore, God gives them the authority of mouth. They have true instruction and walk in peace and uprightness. They save others. Their mouth further guards the knowledge. Next is preservation and stumbling others by their teaching. This is putting out God's word as information not as life.

The knowledge becomes false and it is like a blind man leading another blind man. One pastor spoke that the reason the sky became dark when Jesus was dying on the cross was because all evil spirits and Satan came over. What do you think? It seems to make sense, doesn't it? When you interpret the Scripture spiritually in that manner, you get lost. When I preach the sermon, I do not interpret it allegorically. If you allegorically interpret the Bible, you will lead your congregation to become ignorant. If the knowledge leads to false information, it is like a blind man leading another blind man. This is what it means by stumbling others. In short, "stumbling others" refers to the word of God becoming information. You haven't completely understood the word of God and preach it ignorantly resulting in "the blind leading other blind." Whenever you go to another church, do not delight in hearing a sermon full of spiritual interpretation. It sounds great! "The sky became dark because all the dark evil spirits came over where the cross was." They say things like that because they read/interprets the Bible in their darkness. It is being ignorant. What's next? "They have shown partiality in matters of the law." They only preached the word to the ones that are beneficial to them. Don't even dream of doing this or even seeing this in this church. The word of God must be proclaimed completely.

8 . MALACHI (4)

2 : 10 - 16

10. Have we not all one Father ? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?

11. Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god.

12. As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents of Jacob --even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty.

13. Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands.

14. You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

15. Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

16. "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

Malachi (4) 2:10-16 (10/2011)

The title for today's message is "Why do You not receive our worship?" The book of Malachi is proper for pastor's conference. It is fit for the pastors to hear. The reason I am preaching to our church members is because you are also in the level of priests and you will eventually be commissioned as missionaries to the world. The book of Malachi consists of 6 disputes. Hebrew rabbis use this technique quite a bit in their teaching. They ask questions and answer by themselves and this is how Malachi records the word of God in the book. I would like to begin the third dispute today.

The first dispute in review is from verse 1 to 5 and the key word is ahab. The Israel's dispute is "How come God doesn't love us?" Malachi uses ahab instead of hasad in "God loves you with all His heart." The dispute over love is found from 1 to 5.

The second dispute is quite long from 1:6 to 2:9. God disputes, "You do not honor Me!" and Israel replies, "When have we not honored You?" The dispute comes down to the matter of honor/respect. It is particularly targeting the priests who serve in the temple. God is not addressing this issue of not honoring Him to the lay people but God is focusing on the professional pastors and priests who make money off God that they don't honor God. The reason God doesn't receive their worship is because of their corrupted worship. God doesn't receive their offering because they bring blind, crippled, or diseased animals for sacrifice to God. God points out the evidence of not honoring Him is priests' offering of such corrupted worship to Him. We had two sessions over the second dispute because of its length.

The key word in the second dispute is kabod. It means heavy and we should not treat the word of God lightly. If we do, dire consequence will follow. It also means treasuring the word of God. It is simply the best. We are the community that is willing to die for the word of God. There is nothing to be special about that. We are not the only one to do this. The early church did the same thing. Anyone who receives God is supposed to be willing to die for His word. We have not preached anything special. We have never said, "Special people are supposed to live like this..." Any ordinary and normal child of God would live that way.

The fact that you are a child of God is special. Being a child of God is a great thing. Since you are a child of God, you live an ordinary and regular life a child of God is supposed to live. You should pray for the same reason. You should obey the word of God for the same reason. You should be willing to die for the word. Yes, if you are a child of God, that's the life you should live. The reason you call Jesus as your Lord is to determine to die for Jesus and join the church of your choice. That's how you join the community of church. This generation is so wicked that they don't follow this. They worship God without this commitment and think that they worship Him; however, that's not worship being offered to God. The souls that commit themselves to God already predetermine their willingness to die for God unconditionally and join the church. This is the children of God the Bible talks about.

There is no unordinary and uncommon message that you hear from me. There is also

none of “pastors should live that lifestyle but the lay people don’t have to.” If you are a child of God, you should live in that manner. I have not emphasized “since you are a pastor...” and highlighted the spirituality of the pastors. Why? Because our conferences are for both pastors and lay people. What’s the motive behind that? Everyone should live in that manner. Pastors are also the children of God and lay leaders are also the children of God. Kabod! It means priceless. Treasure the word of God!

Kabod also means honor. We should honor God. Please do not treat your identity as a child of God lightly. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew. His life was pretty much over right there. The identity of a child of God is honorable. I have explained in the exposition of Romans that the citizenship of Rome was so honorable that the citizens observed the ordinances of Rome very well. How much more so for you who hold the citizenship of heaven live your life? Treat your identity as a child of God holding the citizenship of heaven honorably.

Kabod also means the presence of glory. The incident of indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the same as the incident of the death of Jesus on the cross. The Lord enabled the Shekinah glory, His tent, to dwell in us through what He had done on the cross. Since the glory of the Creator God and the whole trinity indwells us, we should not live by our ways, our will, and our plans but by not limiting His presence in our life. On one hand, I have not encountered any man who was so wicked to a point that I could not take anymore. On the other hand, I have not encountered any man who was so good that I could not take anymore. Every creature is about the same. However, who can live such a great life? The one who does not limit the glory of the Holy Spirit in himself. This is important to us, so keep asking Him questions, His wills, His plans, His direction, and His intention.

It also has the meaning of glory, doxa. Most Bibles interpret kabod as glory.

The third dispute I want to address today is found in verse 13b and 14a “You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask ‘Why?’” Do you notice the defiance of Israel? God said, “I don’t want to accept your offerings,” and Israel says, “Why not?” They are confronting/opposing God! Anyone who confronts/opposes God is asking for a big trouble.

God actually said in chapter 1 that He doesn’t want to receive the worship. It was for the priests. What is the reason for that? It is because they don’t honor God. What’s the evidence that they don’t honor God? The corruption of offering is the evidence. Their disrespect to God results in offering up defiled food to God in verse 7. In verse 8 we see they offer up blind animals for sacrifice. Therefore, in verse 10 God says, “I will accept no offering from your hands.”

The second dispute is also blaming the priests. However, the focus shifts over to lay people from 2:10 to 2:16. The reality is that it is coming from the same source. Let me explain this. The priests’ corruption of worship cannot help but leads to lay people’s corruption

of worship. Who is the root? The priests are the root of corruption. If priests offer up holy worship and what is proper worship to God, the worship cannot be corrupted. In short, the main culprit of corruption of worship is priests. There is a book entitled Empty Pulpit. The author contends that pulpits of this generation are emptied. So many messages are being preached, but the pulpits are empty. The corruption of worship comes from the empty pulpit or empty words. We have 11 pastors in this church and I have shared with you last week that whenever I say that something is corrupted, I include myself. I am absolutely a part of it. I say it again that the priests' corruption of worship always leads to lay people's corruption of worship. The main instigator of corruption of worship is the pastors. This is why we have to repent so much.

No matter how hard you try to be filled it is only a matter of time before you die when I feed you the corrupted words and the words that I studied based on my reason and rationality instead of giving you the life. Some may die within a week. Those that are deep in spirituality may take a while before they die. It is just a matter of when...

The priests' corruption of worship comes from the offering/sacrifice itself or the worship itself. How about the lay people? Their corruption of worship does not come from the worship service itself but from their corruption of life. Today, Malachi is rebuking us over the corruption of life.

The proper/complete worship leads to a proper/complete life which in turn leads to higher level of worship which in turn will lead to even higher level of life. In short, worship and life are in the same cycle. Worship is life and life is worship. In another word, a great man cannot fail his worship to God. If one succeeds in his worship to God, he will live a great life. Reverse is also true! If he fails in his life, he will also fail in his worship to God. Your failure of worship and corruption of worship will always be revealed in the corruption of your life. Always!

The corruption of priests leads to the corruption of worship itself. The corruption of priests results in placing defiled food on the altar. What does that mean? The priests' word of proclamation is defiled. The priest is supposed to take the offerings from the people and sacrifice them to God. However, they gave the blind and the unacceptable animals according to the commands in Deuteronomy. They gave them intentionally to save up their wealth.

We also see this In NT. Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem. The priests used to take the blind animal for sacrifice and exchanged it for cash and gave it as offering. Why? To make money! During the time of Jesus the priests sacrificed any animal to God. This is the reason God says, "Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? And you offer them to Me?" I spoke on this last week. Even a man does not even eat the meat of an animal torn by a wild beast, but they offered it to God. They are so wicked! God told them it is not good for even a man to eat it, but they offer it to God. God throws it away saying, "You eat it!"

Such priests' corruption of worship always leads to lay people's corruption. The believer's life is first corrupted. Now, the worship becomes corrupted through the impure life the believers live. The dangerous cycle begins. Life and worship are inseparable. You have lived in the world for a week before God.

Worship is simple. Worship is encountering God and living before Him. Therefore, you have been living with God for a whole week regardless of where you have been like home, work, or business. The whole universe is full of God; He is omnipresent; God is everywhere. Acknowledging that in your life is worship. When you acknowledge such God in your life and bring your pure life to worship, you will experience/offer up explosive worship. Through the worship of life the church's worship to God becomes more powerful. This is the cycle of worship. Today's text indicates that such life is corrupted. Malachi particularly mentions the word, "deal treacherously."

Malachi rebukes us for three things in terms of "dealing treacherously." God is not receiving the worship for three errors in life. God is speaking to Jewish lay people through Malachi "Since you have these errors in your life, I am not going to receive your worship." Please do not think "Ok, if God doesn't receive worship, what can I do? I just move on."

How can I compare this un – acceptance of worship service to? Suppose you have applied for a loan in the bank. You don't need this money for a moving expense but you desperately need it for the surgery of your son. Without this money you applied for, your son is sure to die from major illness. However, you hear from a loan officer in the bank that your application for the loan has been rejected. How would you feel? Of course you can try in another bank. I am speaking in more detail because there are some wicked people who like to come up with other possibilities. Let's just say this bank is the only hope to borrow money. There is no other source of money at the moment. That's our presupposition. You really need the money for your son's life – saving operation, but it is rejected. Will you be happy? Nothing will compare with what you would feel inside.

I am using an illustration to help you understand how serious it is when God does not receive our worship. The continuation of blessings in your life hinges on God who receives your worship and also on you living by the things God blesses you through the worship service. That's how a child of God lives. You worship God and please Him. God in turn is pleased and He blesses you. God gives the reserved blessings, authority, vision, power, and dream through the worship service. The power which is a source of all training flows out to you through the worship. In another word, you cannot live without receiving all these things which are provided through worship. So many people think they can go on in their life without succeeding in worship service. One who succeeds in worship will succeed in life. I speak of this all the time that what would happen to a man who meets the president of his nation every week for one whole year? How much more so for a man who encounters the Lord the Creator in the public worship service every Sunday? It would be beyond our imagination. I cannot deny the fact that the moving worship service and the encountering God every Sun-

day for the last 19 years have shaped who I am today.

Worship is worthy of our willingness to die for it. Please don't think of it vaguely. You have to be willing to die for the worship service. For this single worship service on Sunday you live whole week gnashing your teeth. This goes the same for me. I have an expectation that God is going to do wonderful works through this Sunday's worship service. With that expectation I prepare the message and meditate on them "What do the church members need? What is your intention for them?" I pray "God, proclaim the sound of heaven through my mouth. Give me the word of authority of Your throne. My mouth opens up but may Your mouth open up and let the river of living water flow out to bring healing upon their souls. May Your reserved grace, blessings, authority, and power be poured out unto the souls through the worship. Father of lights, fill them with every good gift and spiritual gift." This is how we are willing to die for the worship service.

Please examine our church members. There are few who haven't been changed and some people have changed because of the ministry. However, the vast majority have been changed through the worship service. God has touched them through the worship service. How? My intention of ministry is never let a man do it but let God. Church members are changed by God's touch in middle of worship service. Pastor Hoon Kim sitting on the third row came to visit the church for the first time. He did not know anything about spirituality and I was concerned about him during the worship. I told myself "When is he going to change?" During the worship service God started touching him and he used up the whole box of Kleenex wiping his tears. I thought "God is working in him." He doesn't know anything about spirituality; he is hardened like a rock; he is full of reason and rationality. The Seoul University graduates are all like that so I thought "Wow, it is gonna be tough with him if he is from Seoul University." God soon changed him so much during the worship service. He cried so much and now he preaches the word of God better than me in English worship service.

My goal is to train great pastors and spiritualists who are greater than me. It all comes down to the worship. Worship is so important but God says that He is not receiving it any more. It is so crazy. I am speechless. "Not accepting worship" is not a small matter. This is why you should prepare for a whole week so that God will receive your worship. Please come with yearning and thirty heart full of "What has God prepared for me this Sunday? Bless me oh God." This yearning and thirst should arise within us and see how much the worship service is moving and how much it resembles the heavenly worship.

Now, let's turn our attention to the three reasons why God is not receiving the worship. First, Malachi says in verse 10b, "Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?" Profaning the covenant of fathers is the same as God not receiving the worship. They dealt treacherously against their brothers. We have read the main text for today and notice that "deal treacherously" is repeated throughout the text except verses 12 and 13. I have addressed the characteristics of Greek and Hebrew in introduction. The reason for repetition of a certain word in either language is the emphasis

on it.

“Deal treacherously” in Hebrew word is bagad. Its root word sounds similar to it but it means cloth. When it is used as noun, it means cloth whereas when it takes a form of verb, it means changing cloth. The reason I keep addressing the original language is to explain the core meaning because it is important.

Bagad refers to putting a different cloth on many people. Everyone is changing their cloth. In short, it means unfaithfulness. You for your own benefit speak one thing to one person and another thing to the other person in disguise depending on people. It also means “wearing a mask.”

Do you recall what I said about the background and the time of book of Malachi? I mentioned several things but there was a severe famine in the land. In a time like that leaders and fellow believers are supposed to comfort and serve one another but they instead cheated and ripped each other off and bribed a judge to skew the judgment in their favor. This is why we hear Malachi speaking you dealt treacherously against others. Judges take the bribery for judgment; witnesses testify falsely for their interest; they interpret the truth according to their desire; they misinterpret the word of God. That’s what it means to “change cloth.” It has several meanings like “to act secretly,” “to rob,” “to act deceitfully, and “to sin.” That’s how bagad was used. When it is used in context of a wife “deal treacherously against wife,” it means sexual abuse including physical abuse. When it is used in context of God “deal treacherously against God,” it refers to idolatry.

Malachi speaks in verse 10 “Do we not all have one father?” He is shifting from a nuance of verse 9 as he addresses the same father. Malachi is focusing on one father. Please pay attention to word “one.” One father means we are one. The second encounter of “one” is in “Has not one God created us?” The third encounter is in verse 15 “Has not the Lord made them one... And why one?”

“One” means echad in Hebrew. The first “one” we see in verse 10 can mean two things. First it can mean Yahweh. Second, it can mean Abraham. We see many instances in the book of Isaiah and the book of Deuteronomy that Israel calls Abraham their father. In John chapter 10 Sadducees and Pharisees hold a dispute with Jesus about a woman caught in the act of adultery. They say, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus replies, “The devil is your father.” Israel calls Abraham as their father. Whether we interpret it as God or Abraham, it is not a big issue to us.

The second “one” we see is also found in verse 10 “Has not one God created us?” Echad emphasizes one here again. Why does Malachi keep emphasizing “one” in verse 10? It is because Malachi wants to emphasize the fact that regardless of how many children there are like 10, 100, or 1,000 since they are all from the same father, they are all one. Apostle John expresses the children of God in different ways in the book of John such as a slave, a child, a friend, and so on. However, what does Jesus call the children of God after the resurrection? Brothers! Jesus told Mary Magdalene “Go and speak the news of my resurrection to broth-

ers." Jesus used "brothers" after the resurrection. It means any child of God who receives this through the cross can now become a brother. Everyone is a brother. People that are sitting right next to you are brothers who will forever be/go with you. I normally do not quarrel with my wife but there are times when a good husband and a wife do quarrel with each other. Suppose I quarrel with my wife. The primary reason I soon repent and restore the relationship with her is because we will live together forever. I don't even want to think about having a problem with her for the rest of eternity. It is the same with other believers. You will know how I feel when you become a pastor. I am not equating my hard work to my righteousness but you know that I am not an ordinary pastor. My goal is not to increase the numbers. I am after one person at a time with prayer, feeding the word, and training them. When they don't change after all that, I do get little disappointed. Sometimes I get upset but later I let it go because I am reminded that they and I will be together forever. Having a conflict with a brother or a sister is a serious matter. That is not only a current matter but an eternal matter. Your disappointment of a brother or a sister is not a present issue but an eternal issue. I hope you get this in your heart. We all have come from the same Father. By the work of Jesus Christ on the cross we all have become brothers and sisters. Since we all have come from one Father, we are all immediate family members in blood. Since we are all under the same Father, we should love one another.

The author of Hebrews speaks in 2:11, "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father." They are of the same essence. This is an incredible proclamation! He dare speaks God and we are of the same essence. The vine tree and vine branch both have the same genetic structure. Likewise the Lord and we are of the same. This is a powerful proclamation.

Apostle Paul also speaks in Ephesians 5:1, "Therefore, be imitators of God." Paul is saying, "Be like God!" He is not saying, "Be God," but "Be like God!" Anyone that says, "Become God" is heretical. We want to become like God! That's the reason He died on the cross for us and pitched His tent to indwell us, so we can speak like God and live like Him. Furthermore, our goal in life is not to live the best human life but to live like God. The Bible says in 2 Peter 1:4 that you are the partaker of divine nature. This is huge! "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Paul speaks in Romans 8:29, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." Jesus became the first-born and we have become His brothers. The family that has one or two children do not understand this but if you have five children like us you would know. Younger children may not listen to the parents but they listen attentively to their oldest sibling. My oldest son is a king to his younger sisters and brothers. When he says, "Hey, bring me some water," they immediately go get it for him; however, when I ask for some water, they all say, "No!" Brother Jesus is important to us! Listen well to brother Jesus and live by

His words. Jesus said in John 13:34 – 35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have loved one another.” This is the exact word of our big brother Jesus. If you don’t listen to His word, you will suffer. My oldest son has almost complete power when it comes to his siblings. Jesus became the first-born of many brothers. Let us live well with Him.

Jesus says in John 17:1, “The hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You.” God has given us the perfect intimacy that Jesus and Father had. It is the glory He had before the creation. Brothers should not lose this intimacy. He has given us what He had with Father. This is the life we are supposed to live. “Deal treacherously” to brothers is despicable.

This is why Malachi speaks, “Do we not all have one father?” Like our Lord had the intimate relationship with God we should also have this intimacy with our brothers. We will address later but the evidence of not having the one father is the abuse of wife by husband and the abuse of the lowly by the authority. If people have different fathers, they can fight against each other. When I was a child I saw children from one family fight against other children from the other family. Both families later got into the fight. Why? Because they have different fathers.

Since we have one father, we can’t fight with one another. Have intimate relationship with one another because of the same father. Please long for the same love, mutual fellowship, and equality in relationships. I addressed it in Ephesians and 1 Peter that whether boss or employees or free or slave, everyone is one in Jesus. If we lose this unity, it is over. Any community that loses its unity will be finished. Therefore, we can’t deal treacherously to our brothers because we have the same father. We can’t destroy this intimacy. The break-up of intimacy between brothers and sisters is denying one father. Denying one father is destroying the community. Destroying the community leads to God’s surrender of the glory He is supposed to receive from the community. If this happens to you, you cannot live a complete life.

I emphasize this in my ministry repeatedly “Do not build give and take relationship with brothers and sisters in the church!” What does that mean? We don’t want to build up give and take relationships. This is absolute! If you approach other believers seeking and building give and take relationship, you will bring down the community of love. Just take a look at big corporations. Why do brothers (children of the owner) fight one another? That’s because brothers have common interests in their assets, so they take each other to the court. This is the reason I say all the time, “Please do not lend your money to others. Give, if you will, freely. Don’t expect others to pay it back to you. If you don’t have money, it is simple that you can’t give. However, if you discern you shouldn’t give, then tell them that you can’t give. Be clear about it. Will that hurt them? Well, you can’t help it in this case. If God tells you to give, then you have to give. However, if God tells you not to give, then you shouldn’t give.

When God tells you to give, then don't expect it back. I am not just saying this. Please do not build give and take relationship in this community. We all have eternal relationship. I don't think there is another relationship that is better than ours. Our Yulbang community will also receive much reward from God. It will be exciting to see Yulbang community town in the heaven. I am still praying that not even one person go to hell from Yulbang community and I don't want anyone to make it to heaven shamefully.

When you "bagad" against your brother, it means you change your clothes according to your benefits. That's not the life you want to live. Folks, we are all working on spirituality, but what is our end goal in all this? The goal of spirituality is not the healing. The work that we do such as sending missionaries, healing the sick, holding conferences and others is for the restoration of the goals God had at the creation. What is that goal? It is building up the Kingdom of God. What is the Kingdom of God? It is the kingdom of love. In short, loving brothers God repeats so much about in the Bible is the goal of our spirituality. May I remind you that it is simple? Healing brothers/sisters when you don't love them is a story of spiritual gurus who have gone after spiritual gifts. Again, what is the goal of our spirituality? It is to build the kingdom of love. This is God's goal and it is a tremendous task. That's the reason the Bible mentions the love for the community throughout, especially Paul mentions the love for the brothers in his epistles all the time. Not only Paul but Peter also speaks of brotherly love. This is to point how much we should aim to love brothers and sisters. The conclusion of spirituality is love!

Peter speaks in 2 Peter 1:5-7 "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness...knowledge...self – control...perseverance...godliness, brotherly kindness..., and love." Peter mentions love at the end "Make every effort to add love!" We work on our spirituality and the only thing that should be revealed in us through our proper fellowship with God is love. If you don't love your brother, it means nothing has been done. If you don't love your brothers, everything you do is in the same/similar level. You know one's deep level of relationship with God through his level/maturity of love. God says, "Oh, now that I see your love for your brothers I know you really love Me."

I spoke in exposition of 1 John 4:17 that the greatness of the Early Church is that we can love God the way Jesus loved the world. That's the reason they all believed without a slightest doubt Jesus would come back before the generation passes away. This is the biggest characteristic of the Early Church. It is to love just like Jesus. In reality, this is not so difficult. I say this all the time that the reason living by God is difficult for you is because you are so used to living by this world. If Jesus comes right into you, you are supposed to immediately love like God does. The essence of God is love. Apostle John had seen all the glorious things of heaven and said only one thing "God is love!" When Jesus comes into us, we can love like God.

However, why is that difficult? Expressing the love of God is not so difficult. It is rather my wickedness that gets in the way and interferes with it. Habakkuk mentions five wicked

desires. You should experience what it is like to be seized by God alone in your life. Experiential Christian walk is important. Do you know how exuberant it is to live by God? I frequently mention the state of Adam in the Garden. The reason it sounds ambiguous, mysterious, and abstract is because you haven't experienced such world. You have no clue about it. However, you should experience it. Just like Paul encountered God and fell to the ground you should experience the same. If you ask me, "Must I? Yes, you must."

The reason love of God is not expressed in you is because of bondage you have inside. The fact that you work on your spirituality is not because the end goal is spirituality itself. I repeat this many times. Even the vision of this church is not the end goal. I have no intention to drive people with vision. Jesus is our goal! Anything that stands in our way to Jesus must be given up. If it is spirituality, then it has to go. Anything that gets in the way to Jesus must be removed. Many churches drive their members toward their vision. It is true that vision is important and it is precious; however, nothing is more important than the fulfillment of God's love. Why do you have vision? Isn't it because of your desire to fulfill the love of God?

Why do we send 300,000 missionaries? Do we want to boast in the number? No, we don't. I have given up my desire to boast in the number a long time ago. I mind you that you will never see church growth if you hold worship service for three and half hours. I have told a visitor this morning that the worship will continue for two more hours and she almost fainted.

The love of God itself is not that difficult. The expression of His love is not that challenging. It is your wickedness inside that blocks/hinders the expression of God's love. Living by God is not difficult. You experience difficulty because the worldliness, which destroys "living by God," is hardened inside. That's why you work so hard on spirituality to extract it. Extract the five fundamental wickednesses according to Habakkuk so that you can build the kingdom of God's love. Continue to focus on God!

When I first met God 19 years ago, He led me to experience many goals of spirituality that I would ultimately reach. I knew I wasn't at the right level to fulfill the goals at the moment but God let me experience them. One time I was up on a prayer mountain receiving much blessings for three nights and four days. I was reading through the book of Revelation and heaven opened up every time I read. I didn't go to heaven but the heaven came down upon me. That's why I don't believe most of the testimonies which talk about having gone to heaven and come back. Why? Because you don't go to heaven but rather it comes to you. I recall the heaven coming down upon me. I also recall my love for God fully remained in me and every evil that limits "living by God" became extinct. I recorded the hymn 168 on both sides of the tape for 90 minutes and listened to it all the time. I sang along "When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more... And the roll is called up yonder I'll be there." I would just repeat it thinking when I can go to heaven.

The fundamental wickedness completely disappeared. For example, I visited Mrs.

Misun Kim who was on death bed battling cancer and noticed how beautiful she was in the last minutes of her life. All her greed/desires were removed. She hadn't liked children but she shared the fighting sounds from my children Meek and Peace (real names) were so good to her ears. She said that she was so thankful for everything and happy. Her fundamental wickedness was gone for good and she rejoiced in God. The only regrettable thing is that she has this spirituality right before her death. This is your ultimate goal. Nothing bothers her any more. Everything looks beautiful, happy, and grateful. This is the characteristic of those who live by God alone. The reason you are not there is because you are all mixed up. When I order this Korean/Chinese fusion spicy seafood noodle soup, I sort out the weird looking seafood that I do not recognize. Then, this dish comes to me magnificently. A certain restaurant puts in too much unrecognizable seafood and I pick them all out including peppers. They are too spicy. After that I confirm the glory of spicy seafood noodle soup. Likewise you should pick out from the mixtures.

The matter of loving brothers is not a simple matter or useless matter but your goal. Working on spirituality is the image of God. The Kingdom of God is loving one another. When I went to heaven and hell, I found the same condition of people. People in heaven had unbendable arms and people in hell also had unbendable arms. However, people in heaven were all chubby and beautiful whereas people in hell were skinny like famine-stricken people. How did that happen? People in heaven served one another and fed each other whereas people in hell all tried to feed their own mouths. So, they became so skinny.

This is the realization of the kingdom of love. This is the original purpose of God's creation for us. Criticizing others, disdainning others, and dealing others treacherously are man's history of struggle. History of struggle is seen in animal kingdom or shall I say man's kingdom? Kingdom of God is different. The 15th chapter of John demonstrates that the kingdom of love is being willing to die for brothers.

No other love is greater than that. The climax of love is death. It is dying for others. I speak to our church community with regard to the sick and the suffering that we should fast for them and cry out on their behalf. I mind you fasting itself is not our goal. Through fasting and intimate relationships we have, we partake in their suffering. When they are in pain, we share their pain. When they are in sorrow, we share their sorrow. We also share their joy. This is what being a community of love is all about. I emphasize this all the time. This is our goal. This is the same goal God originally had when He first created us. The reason for the death of Jesus on the cross is for the remake/reconstruction of same love. Be willing to die for Jesus instead of system.

Paul speaks in Romans 14:13, "Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way." Let me illustrate this. Suppose a brother is walking down the street and you see feces in front of him. Instead of yelling "Watch out for feces," you cover it up with your body. Once you yell "feces" everyone is going to get dirty. When a soldier accidentally dropped the live

grenade during training, his commanding officer threw down his own body to cover up the explosion to save the lives of other soldiers. This is a true story. We want to be like that commanding officer. Do not put any obstacle or stumbling block before your brother. This is what a community should look like. Everyone takes on the wickedness for the benefit of his brothers or sisters. This is true community!

Paul also speaks in Romans 15:1, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves." Paul says that we should bear the weaker brothers. If you joined the armed forces, you would know this. A soldier fully arms himself and walks 10 kilometers. The equipment weighs 36 kilogram in my time but now I hear that it is only 26 kilogram. When a company marches for 10 kilometer and one soldier falls behind, the whole company falls behind. Therefore, if a soldier cannot carry all of his heavy equipment, a fellow soldier carries his backpack, another soldier carries his rifle and others help him to walk. The rifle is light these days, but it used to be heavy long time ago. An automatic rifle particularly had to be carried on the shoulder and run.

We carry the failings of the weak. This is the beauty of the community. Paul says in Philippians 2:3 to consider others better than you. This is a fundamental of spirituality. Paul speaks in verse 5 "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." We need to fully have humility of considering others better than us so we can embrace others and lift them up. That's the type of spirituality we need. Those that act so cocky don't really know anything. Humility is about embracing others and lifting them up. We have many members that are hurting and it is a good opportunity to minister them and to meet their needs. Many people that join our church are broken down in the world. This is a beautiful community from the perspective that you have more opportunities to love them instead of sitting down...

We are supposed to live like that and it is unthinkable to rip off brothers and deal treacherously against them. "Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?" The Hebrew word for profane is chalal which means to pierce.

Covenant refers to God's unilateral choice and pouring out His blessings, power, and authority and everything else that are entitled to His children. If they pierce this covenant, then it is no longer valid. The relationship with God is over. In short, dealing treacherously to brothers is piercing the covenant with God. It is drilling a hole.

Do you realize now how important loving your brother is? This word is not like an accessory but it is rather the ultimate goal He has given us. Practically speaking, my spirituality and my walk with God lead to a conclusion which is to love brothers. What is left with Jesus when you subtract love from Him? Jesus said, "Love one another just like I have loved you." That's God's fundamental goal that He has clearly defined for us. Love others just like I have loved you. Reversely, Jesus is asking you, "If you don't do that, does that mean I haven't loved you so you don't love others?" Has Jesus loved you? Yes, He has. However, the fact that you don't love others may be evidence that you haven't been sealed as a brother under the same

Father.

Love one another! Malachi speaks, "We are born from the same Father! We are born from the same God! Why do you deal treacherously against your brother?" In our Yulbang community, we can say that there aren't people who deal treacherously against others but we do have many apathetic people. This is also dealing treacherously. I do not define the antonym of love as hatred. The antonym of love is apathy. You hate someone because you still care for him/her. If you have no concern over him, then there is no reason to hate him. I would like to make it clear for the Yulbang community that although no one deals treacherously against brothers, we are apathetic. You don't care how well or poorly brothers/sisters are doing. What's the purpose of the cell group ministry in our church? The purpose of cell ministry is a system in which every hurting and suffering brother/sister is taken care of. The church takes care of them even in millions. In addition, why do you do ministry in your cell group? You heal when one is sick. You also prophesy and deliver them. Why do we have you do all kinds of ministry in your cell group? Our goal is to build up a church that you can directly care for the sick and the suffering. Therefore, please care for them. Build the kingdom of love. Please look after your cell group members throughout this week. What do they need? Call them up, talk to them, and love them more. The true community cries together when one cries and rejoices together when one rejoices. If we become such a beautiful community, then we don't need many people. There is no law that says we need many members in our church. Loving others is so important to us!

Israel was experiencing a difficult time around BC 450. They should have endured with love in such a time but rather they dealt treacherously and tormented others. That's the reason God says that He can't receive their worship. The goal God had given them was the kingdom of love but they lost it. Israel's worship to God did not matter to Him and what else would matter to God? Prayer even didn't matter. Let us love each other. Really love others! This is not only the goal God has given to our community but also the goal of God in the Bible and the grand plan of God.

What's the second cause of not receiving worship from Israel? What area of life didn't measure up to? Let's look at verse 11b "Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god." There are two interpretations of this verse.

First, the traditional interpretation is that Israelites married non-Jews. It was received as the best interpretation for the last 2,000 years. There was no other alternative interpretation. In short, they married with foreign women. We can agree to this without any problem because one of the identities we see when Israel is full of Yahweh faith is the pure blood line. They considered their pure blood line importantly.

Ezra records a revival in Israel. Countless Israel men, at the time, married foreign women and had children. Upon the arrival of revival in Israel, Ezra spoke to men, "God is not pleased with your foreign wife and their children. Kick them out!" Men wouldn't heed such

thing in ordinary circumstance. I mean it is impossible to do. Yes, their wives are not Jews but they have been living together for so long and they have children between them. However, how can they kick them out just because God is not pleased with them? They may say, "Get out," but what if a son looks straight into their eyes with tears rolling down, holds onto father's leg, and says, "Father, why do you hate me?" What can they do at that point?

Most people just live with the compromise if the sin has already personified in them. Everyone would compromise. I expounded on the Romans message that if sin comes in and takes up its root inside, the power to resist to sin is very low. It is extremely difficult to break away from it. If the sin is in the stage of grass, you can pull them out. If the sin is in big tree stage, axe is not enough. You need an electric saw. If you personify sin, you are inviting death. If the sin grows big, most people compromise with it because of fear. They can't help it.

During the exposition of Romans I shared the story of mafia. A certain member of mafia wanted to quit mafia and the boss granted it. How did he get out? The boss told him to roll up his fist and he cut out all the flesh of fist with finger nail clipper. That's how the mafia members can quit. That's why most members just continue to be a part of mafia. This is how ordinary people live with sin, the personified sin. Everyone lives like that. I told you a story of my son when he was a little boy. I tried to remove the T.V. from home one day and my little son was upset and kicked things around. Why? Because the fear of sin (removing TV) made him afraid! I removed it anyway and it has been 10 years.

When sin is prevalent, it is difficult to cut it off in ordinary circumstance. Now, the revival is here, so it is possible. It is now time to cut down the big tree (sin). It was not possible before but now they say, "Leave us!" How come? With the revival they now understand how important the will of God is with the pure blood line.

In exposition of book of Colossians, I spoke of 400,000 Jews living in Alexandria who were all slaves. They were not in a state to live as slaves. They were educated and rich people. One was even in charge of king's treasury. However, they all chose to live as slaves. Why? Because if they acquire Roman citizenship, they have to worship idols! They did not want to give up their Yahweh faith for idolatry. They wanted to preserve their pure faith in God; hence, they became slaves. The church 400,000 Jews built in Alexandria is the Colossae Church. In short, Colossae Church excelled in preservation of pure faith more than other churches. They built the church in such impoverished and challenging area, but they bore great fruits and impacted the world.

From this perspective of preservation of pure blood line, marrying a foreign woman is unacceptable to Israelites. God is rebuking them in the book of Malachi. In Nehemiah chapter 6 former prisoners are returning to Jerusalem. There are not enough people, especially the priests. There are simply too many duties but too few priests. Some claimed to be descendants of priest but not found in the genealogy. They simply dismissed the self-claimed

priests. In a time when even one person is precious, they dismiss people just because they are not found in genealogy. Why? Because Israelites were strongly attached to the idea of preservation of pure blood line!

Pure blood is also important to us. The determination to live by Jesus alone is critical to us. There is none beside Jesus. Only Jesus is our goal. The vision we have and everything we have must be thrown out if they are not for Jesus. We should be able to give them all up. It is clear.

The second interpretation of the daughter of foreign god is that they married women of Asherah who were at that time the goodness of prosperity. This interpretation came to light recently and it is a good interpretation theologically. I like this. They married Asherah who is the symbol of prosperity. We can find four evidences in the text.

First, Malachi speaks in verse 11, "Judah has broken faith." What did he do exactly? A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. "A detestable thing" is always tied to idolatry particularly in the book of Deuteronomy. As much I can recall "a detestable thing" in Deuteronomy is used in association with idolatry. The book of Malachi was heavily influenced by deuteronomic language. Again, it is referring to idol worship of Asherah.

Second, Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves. How did Judah desecrate the sanctuary of God? By idolatry! The conclusive evidence is found in verse 13 "Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands." Flooding the Lord's altar with tears means filling the Lord's altar with tears. Is it a good thing to fill the Lord's altar with tear or not? Is filling the Lord's altar with tears in worship service good or bad? It is a good way of worship. However, as soon as the Lord sees the tears He no longer pays attention to their offerings or accepts them with pleasure from their hands. Why does God rebuke them? Has God's heart changed all of sudden? Is God saying, "I don't want to see your tear! Stop crying!"

God is vulnerable to tears. God spoke to Hezekiah, "I saw your tears and heard your prayer." God likes to see tears. According to Jewish literature Kadish (?) there is an expression that the eye of Jesus is made up of tears of women. In addition, according to Kablar of Jewish literature God counts the number of tears of women. Does God like tears or hate them? He truly loves them. A Christian walk without tears is evidence of legalization in one's life. However, it seems that God doesn't like tears today. What's going on?

Not too long ago a Korean at Fuller wrote a thesis about tears and smile. Long time ago one of the worship services for Asherah was known as sacrifice of tear. It is a worship that worshippers detestably shed tears to draw out reward and mercy from Asherah. God considers such worship detestable. This is not my words but from a Ph. D dissertation in Fuller. In short, God doesn't receive this sacrifice of tear that was offered to Asherah.

The final evidence is found in verse 10 that they profaned the covenant of our fathers. It refers to the breaking of the covenant. It further means giving up God. In another word, they worshiped idol.

Four clear evidences lead to a proper conclusion that marrying a daughter of foreigner means marrying Asherah. Malachi speaks in verse 12, "As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord cut him off from the tents of Jacob – even though he brings offerings to the Lord Almighty" (NIV). (I will use NASV for this verse since NIV does not match with Pastor Kim's Korean Scripture.) Thus, according to NASV verse 12 is "As for the man who does this, may the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob everyone who awakes and answers, or who presents an offering to the Lord of hosts." The interpretation of "awakes and answers" is ambiguous. The Hebrew word for awakes is *uwr* and for answers is *anah*. The Septuagint interprets it as witness or answer. Luther interprets it as master and scholar. So, we have many interpretations. NIV combined all of them and just said, "Whoever he may be."

Therefore, anyone regardless of whether he is a priest of Israel or lay person whoever marries Asherah and worship should be cut off from the tents of Jacob. Ironically, this is what's happening to today's churches. Asherah, let me remind you, is a goddess of prosperity. Of many corruptions we have in churches, mammonism stands out. This is our problem.

Jesus says in Luke 16:13, "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." The evil spirit that oversaw money at that time was Mammon. Money itself is non – person but if you love it and personify it, it becomes an evil spirit and enters into you. You would be surprised how much mammonism has penetrated into churches. Many people love money more than they love God. The Bible says that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Mammonism is working in today's church as much it did in other times in Bible. You may say that you are not one of them; however, the materialism is working in your life as much as anyone. The age of materialism! The contemporary church members can give up worship, prayer, and commitment over money in a split second. I have seen so many of them. They give up the whole thing for it.

We can't serve two masters. This doesn't just apply to materials. If you think the world is greater in your Christian walk, it is coming from mammonism. When I address tithe in this church, I tell everyone who joins this church must tithe. I am not talking about money. I am asking for them to make a decision. Are you going to live by God or by this world? I prayed earlier that I do not address the topic of tithe in this message. Since I am on this topic, I will share this with you. If you attend this church and do not want to tithe, please don't attend this church any more. Please! You will die and I will die. We will all die. Tithe is a fundamental principle in our church.

Why does God give our church plentiful grace? Because of our faithful commitment to live by God alone! With 180 members we had a budget of 1.8 million dollars which is a big

amount for the size. This, however, does not surprise us. How come? I believe it is natural that God blesses prosperity to those who are willing to die for Him. For us money is not important and the world is not important. For us God is everything. I have no doubt at all that whatever God does He will fulfill it according to His will. We should cut out the mammonism, Asherah. If you marry Asherah, your worship to God cannot be accepted. I hope you see this creeping mammonism in you and furthermore uncommitted things to God in your Christian walk. Your love for this world and its prosperity are very dangerous.

Until the Lord returns or as long as this church exists everyone should make a commitment to live by God alone and everyone will tithe. Let me address the historical background of tithe. Some erroneously say, "Tithe is a carryover from Old Testament." Tithe is not limited to just 10%. Instead of God setting 10% to those who live by God they should be able to give God anything or everything. Can we not give even 90%? The goal of the businessmen in our church is to give 90%. In America there is a big nationwide department store known as K-mart. To my knowledge there was 2,700 stores and the owner recently passed away. I have heard that he tithed 90%. I would like the business owners to make a commitment of faith. You are free to give more than 10% and I would like to challenge you to give 90%. Think about this! Do you think God is stingy to give so little to someone who tithes 90%? I am saying, "If God gives you 10 million dollars, give 9 million and live with 1 million. You say, "1 million dollars is not enough for me"? Then, ask God for 100 million and live with 10 million.

Malachi speaks in verse 14, "You ask, 'Why?' It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant." Verses 11 through 14 can be interpreted in the same context. Verse 14 can, of course, interpreted as one who leaves his wife also leaves God. However, that's not the right interpretation. Verses 11 through 14 are addressing the marriage to the goddess Asherah.

If you sum up the interpretation of verses 11 through 14, it is like this "Unfaithful husband Judah married foreign idol and divorced his wife of youth, Yahweh religion." That's what it means. The point is verses 11 through 14 flow together. In another word, if you fall into the god of prosperity of this world, God will never receive your worship. I recently have heard of a story about a certain church. They were boasting that members who tithe are 10%. For them it was a lot and that's the reality.

Yulbang Church now has one member who tithes 10,000 dollars a month. We have had many members who tithe 2,000 dollars a month. How can a church made up of "army of ants" have a yearly offering of 2 million dollars? It is possible because everyone tithed. I have been so gentle lately that I don't ask anyone who doesn't tithe "Why don't you tithe? Pay back double!" I did that for a while. I brought in those who don't tithe and told them to pay back 1.5 times. Last Sunday I tried to scare some people by saying, "If you don't tithe and get caught, pay back 4 folds." No one has paid 4 folds in this church, yet. I have become so gentle. I don't like to push people around. I mean there is no reason to continue Christian

walk without tithe. If you go to Buddhist temple, they give you a free meal.

Next, let's take a look at verses 15 and 16 "God doesn't receive your worship because you divorce your wife or abuse her treacherously." This passage bothers many brothers. Malachi speaks in verse 16, "'I hate divorce,' says the Lord God of Israel, 'and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,' says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." Divorce and abusing wife corrupt Israel's worship.

Malachi speaks in verse 15, "Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth." The translation could be better. One out of "Has not the Lord made them one?" in Hebrew is echad. It can be rendered "God created a man and a woman as one on one." God created Adam and Eve one-on-one. We have second one in "and why one?" It should be capitalized since eshad refers to Creator who is one. Translation in Bible is little disappointing. Here it means the Creator.

What does "in flesh and spirit they are his" mean? This is very challenging to translate because there is no verb. Without a verb, it is difficult to understand in Hebrew language. If we give a shot at it, it would mean something like the spirit is full. The overall interpretation is "Since God is the Creator, He can give numerous wives to Adam. The reason God gave him one wife was to seek godly offspring." What is the reason God gives a husband and a wife as one on one to a family? It is to seek godly offspring. That's it! That's the right interpretation. In short, since God is Creator, He can create countless wives for Adam. However, He gave one wife to Adam to seek godly offspring.

When a couple passionately loves each other, their children will become godly. This is very important. The deep love between a husband and a wife is fundamental to sanctify the children at home. Leading the children to pray is great but if a couple doesn't love each other, regardless of any spiritual training the children won't be pious. I have studied pastors and I've noticed that many pastors' children experience downfall. It is quite difficult. The root is not always attributed to this but in many cases the problem between a pastor and his wife led to children's demise.

I shared with you last week that becoming a pastor is not a simple matter. In any profession if you are good in one area/thing, you will be successful. However, it is not so for pastors. If you preach well, do you become a famous pastor? Well, that's a problem in Korean churches. They think just preaching well will make them a good pastor. That's a nonsense. There should be no shortcoming in life, integrity, preaching, and spirituality. The qualification for a bishop according to 1 Timothy is being blameless. A pastor should not lack in any area. This is the qualification for a pastor. Therefore, you can't volunteer to become a pastor but God who enables you and who has called you must mold you. In short, you can be a pastor if you have a calling. It is not worthy to volunteer. There is no reward and the qualification is too strict. It is much better to be a lay person since he/she receives reward and has loose

qualification. I became a pastor because God called me. I didn't volunteer for it. My wife is a witness. I shared my heart with her "The lay ministry is so important. Why don't you marry me and we will involve in lay ministry." I should have stopped there. The next word out of my mouth killed me "If you have a calling to be a pastor's wife, I guess God will call me." Next thing I knew God started the calling.

If a pastor couple is not healthy in their relationship, the church won't be healthy. If a wife in a family is not happy, that family won't be healthy. Wife in Korean means "a sun inside." When a sun light reaches every corner, children are healthy. If a sun is sullen and depressed, her light cannot properly reach the children. Passionate love between a husband and a wife will lead them to good health. Children will also become godly. Giving respect to a wife and raising her up in family is critically important. Raise up the mother/wife.

A church is the same. Pastors, I speak at pastor's seminar and one foolish thing I find in pastors is that they don't raise up their wife and they dream of becoming a healthy church. When a pastor's wife is happy, a church will be happy. Please remember it. The mother of church, pastor's wife, is unhappy; therefore, church members cannot properly eat. I expounded on books of Timothy that 70% of pastor's wife of Greater Seoul area which consists of 10,000 churches are suffering from depression and schizophrenia. That's for true. When I engage in healing ministry, I find that so true. The wound of pastors' wives are unbelievably deep. I don't measure the success of ministry with the number of church members. At least I know my wife is happy. There is the reason you are healthy. All I have to do is make my wife happy in my ministry. Then, my wife takes care of the rest of ministry. This is the principle of church ministry. This is the principle of family as well.

I shared this in the exposition of 1 Timothy that "husband of one wife" is a qualification for a bishop. It means that a bishop must be respected by his wife. That's the qualification. You may ask, "Why should a husband make his wife happy all the time? Pastor, isn't it ok for a wife to make her husband happy?" Where is the root? The order which beautifies the world begins with it. God begins from that point. A husband makes his wife happy.

I shared this during the exposition of book of Ephesians "Love your wife just like Jesus loves the church." It means to give up your life as you love your wife. The confucian culture we have in Korea is very satanic. I say this again that oppression over a soul or a man is the work of evil spirit not the Holy Spirit. A leader must examine himself over this. We typically correlate leadership with a strong charisma. We further equate charisma with cutting people with like a knife. That's not a leadership! Servanthood is a leadership. Any leader that oppresses others in Christianity is satanic. Devil seizes souls not the people of God. Only one that rules over souls is God alone.

Likewise a man shouldn't recklessly oppress his wife. Why do you abuse her and oppresses her recklessly? Confucianism and Confucius are devil. This is true! We should uproot every bitter roots of confucian culture in this nation. Brothers should genuinely repent. We

should listen to our wives attentively. I am not saying brothers should listen to wives who don't work on their spirituality, who have no Christian walk, and who don't know the will of God. However, most wives in our church are more spiritual. Wives pray more and deeper. The reasons men are disappearing in church and intimidated are first because they haven't restored their spirituality. Second, because they can't make their wives happy. Therefore, men can't speak up in front of their wives. I am not saying speaking up itself is a good thing.

I do not desire to see brothers in this church chit chat and labor over small things. I wish the brothers push ahead and sort of dictate the flowing of stream with their manly hands. So, how do you do it? Make your wife happy. You are obsessed with small matters because you can't make your wife happy. When your wife is happy, handles the tasks as your helping mate, and supports you unhindered, you can't help but to do well. This is true! Unless a wife is happy nothing really gets done. This is God's order of creation which beautifies the world. Why do we have to make wives happy? Because this is the order God has set!

The John's Hopkins University in America categorized the Korean women's exasperation as mental illness. In my prophetic ministry I met many young ladies who weren't suffering from exasperation; however, all grandmothers whom I met were suffering from much scars in their hearts. Their husbands passed away but the husband is alive in their hearts in many cases. Their hearts are still hurting so much. When I minister them and touch their hearts, many are singing a song that goes something like this "this world is full of hurts and regrets..." This is the result of Confucian culture in this nation. Think about this! A husband is sitting and smoking with a short pipe in the bottom of a bedroom and he calls his wife who is working outside in the yard to bring him an ashtray that's in the other side of the room. "Hey, bring me the ashtray." He can do it himself easily yet he always calls on his wife who is out in the yard. He controls his wife. I believe none of our brothers is like that but if there is, he should repent deeply. Disdaining your wife is same as disdaining your God. Abusing your wife is also abusing your God. That's the reason God doesn't receive your worship. Malachi speaks in verse 15, "So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth." "Guarding yourself in your spirit" means you have to do it. We also see this in verse 16b, "So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith."

Paul speaks in 1Thessalonians 4:4, "That each of you should learn to control his own body (wife) in a way that is holy and honorable." This is a scary saying. To whom is "holy and honorable" used? It is used to God. So, what does this mean? It means that a husband should treat his wife like his God. A wife submits to her husband and a husband loves his wife. Is submission difficult or love? Love goes all the way of giving his life up for the sake of her. All the problems at home begin with a husband. "Each of you should learn to control his own body that is holy and honorable." This is scary, but I can't do it to tell you the truth. I can't even to it to God or Jesus let alone my wife. Yes, it hurts me. Let us extract Confucianism and satanic culture that try to control wife.

Sisters, please pray for your husband with regard to this. Not because you want to be

treated holy and honorable so you can be comfortable but because you want your husband to raise you up to be a leader at home, especially to your children. In my preparation of this message I was planning to rebuke children. If your children are rude to your wife, then stomp all over your children. Raise your wife up! It is terrible even to joke about your wife in front of your children. I repented... Children also shouldn't come at their mother. Please sisters, pray for your husband that you can be established as a leader at home. This is a short cut to a success. How do you define success? It is not making lots of money or saving lots of money. The success is standing before God as a faithful leader of a family. It is ok to make less money. Pastors, it is ok to have small number of members in your church. Your ministry is successful if your wife and your children acknowledge it. Who wouldn't be successful in his ministry if his family acknowledges it? That's the key.

I speak to pastors on several occasions that if a pastor cannot make his wife happy, quit ministry. Please remember that. I personally know a lot of pastors whose families are broken down and yet, sadly, their necks are stiff because of small membership they have in the church.

Malachi speaks in verse 16, "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as with his garment," says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." "Covering with his garment" means sleeping with someone in Hebrew expression. It means sexual abuse. A husband forces it when his wife does not agree to it. Even the worldly court judged it as rape. A wife does not want it but a husband sexually abuses her. This is dangerous. Threatening a wife to sleep together is not the way. Sexuality is a beautiful thing. If you genuinely love your wife, sexuality is a wonderful thing.

"I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as with his garment," says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." Abusing your wife is same as abusing your God. Looking down on your wife is also looking down on your God. If that's what your life is like, then God won't receive your worship. The happiness of your wife is your happiness. I am not saying that a husband doesn't have to be happy. When your wife is happy, you can't help but to be happy. Your wife is a strong arm of Jehovah. When your helping partner who is a strong arm of Jehovah functions effectively as God's right arm, then you will be happy. This is the order of creation from God.

This doesn't take place and you rather deal treacherously, God will not receive your offering. As long as your wife is unhappy and upset, your crying out to God and prayer won't be heard. I put it bluntly. Although I can preach flawlessly, if my wife is upset with me sitting in the back, I can't worship. That's what happens to me even today.

Be happy! When a wife is happy, her husband is also happy. I am a successful pastor. Why? Not because I have many members in the church. It is because my wife and children

acknowledge my ministry and acknowledge me as a pastor. That's all it takes!

May my brothers be leaders of a blessed home making their wives happy. That's how you get godly children. If a husband and a wife love passionately, their children will become pious. Yes, it is true. I have five children to know this to be true. If my relationship with my wife is little awkward, my oldest child senses it right away and he tries to see how the wind blows. The air in the home suddenly gets cold. When my wife hugs them, they all love it and they are happy.

9 . MALACHI (5)

2 : 17 - 3 : 5

17. You have wearied the LORD with your words. "How have we wearied him?" you ask. By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

1."See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

2.But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.

3.He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,

4.and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

5."So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty.

Malachi (5) 2:17-3:5 (12/2011)

The book of Malachi consists of six disputes. We have covered three disputes thus far. The first dispute is "Does God love us?" The second dispute is "When did we not honor God?" The third dispute is "How come you don't receive our worship?" We just finished the third dispute. Today we will cover the fourth dispute from 2:17 to 3:5 with the question "How have we wearied Him?" God says, "You have wearied Me so much that I am suffering." Israel replies with defiance, "When have we wearied You? Have we beaten you? Have we poked you with a needle? How have we wearied You?" This is the point of fourth dispute.

Before we start there are a few questions I want to address as a part of introduction. The first question is "Why do we treat 2:17 – 3:5 as one section?" When I preach a message, I don't divide the main text without a reason. The structure of the scripture dictates the separation. The second question is "Why do you particularly address this text?" Hebrew scholars in 7 A.D. divided the text from 2:17 to 3:5 with vowel point. In our Bibles the text continues to 3:6. However, Hebrew scholars separated the text including 3:5 with their vowel point.

Another reason is that the tense changes beginning with verse 6. The new section does not start from verse 7. Tense changes in verse 6 which no longer has the eschatological perspective. That's the reason the new section begins with verse 6 and the content signals a third dispute. When we divide the sections, this is the correct division in terms of logical approach. It happens frequently such as in book of Romans. Such structure in Romans is important because it changes the whole meaning. We also see it in Ephesians and in Corinthians. The relationship between 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 13:1 is another example. If you divide sections falsely, then it will completely change the meaning. So, from 2:17 to 3:5 is the fourth dispute. In Hebrew book of Malachi, there is no chapter 4 whereas Korean Bible contains chapter 4. This is an important part in expository preaching. I preach with regard to these things.

Another thing I want to address in this introduction is found in verse 17 "You have wearied the Lord with your words." Who are "you" in verse 17? The subject in this verse is a key. It is not referring to the lay people of Israel. Malachi speaks in 3:3, "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness." Who is wearying God? The Levites are wearying God. In another word, it is pastors. The servants of God are wearying God. The introduction of today's text indicates that this word is given to God's servants. Only verse 5 is given to everyone. Verses 3 and 4 are given to God's servants, Levites. The word should be applied in pastors' life; however, since we are all royal priests and should live as Levites, it applies to all of us. I shared in the exposition of Numbers that a member of church can be divided into three duties or categories: laymen, Levites, and priests. A Christian should be able to fit into all three categories. This is important.

A layman dies instantly upon touching a holy artifact. Levite serves God in the Taber-

nacle and sanctuary but in very limited ways. Levite also dies upon touching a hold artifact like a layman. Only a priest can touch what is holy. Spiritually speaking, a Christian can touch what is holy and not die only when he matures, becomes holy and pure, and joins the rank of priests. In another word, when worship is lifted up in the holy of holies, everyone is touched and renewed. However, if a Christian is not acknowledged in the rank of priests, he will slowly die. It has a deep spiritual meaning. When a Christian joins a church, after a certain time he should handle and be acknowledged in all three categories: layman, Levite, and priest. Then, he will not die upon touching what is holy.

Since the foundation of Yulbang Church, more people left this church than current membership. I am sure some people left with good intention. From my perspective many people left with frustration and despair saying “What kind of church is this?” Why? Because they were not ready to touch what is holy! I am not saying that this church is better than other churches. What I am saying is that many agree the word of God given through this church and the spiritual condition of this church require the members to live in the holy of holies; otherwise, they will experience much difficulty. This is the reason the members should all reach and join the status of priests after some time. This is how you can praise God’s glory and have an inspiring Christian walk even when you touch what is holy. You can meet God in the mercy seat according to Exodus 25:25 and have a passionate walk with God.

Jesus died on the cross to open up the holy of holies for us. That’s the reason Christians in NT context must live out his Christian life in the holy of holies. Prayer, word, worship, one’s life and Christian walk have to be done in the holy of holies. Any part of life that does not go through the holy of holies is not life. This word is given to the Levites who are current day pastors; however, I have no doubt that this word is also given to all of us.

Let us continue the introduction and take a look at verse 17 “You have wearied the Lord with your words.” Malachi is saying, “Levites, you have wearied the Lord with your words. You speak thoughtlessly.” Even when lay people speak recklessly, God hears all and is hurt. Pastors who make a living by the word of God as professional weary God with their words. We shouldn’t speak mindlessly. God hears everything you say. He is truly omniscient. I think too many people speak thoughtlessly. Let’s do this right! Reckless speech asks for a trouble.

Mature Christians exhibit their maturity in different ways. The way you speak reveals your maturity. You always talk about the world, common sense, and your own affairs. When the mature Christian speaks, a spirit flows out and he speaks on behalf of others not for himself. When you hear from a mature Christian, your spirit is refreshed. You can notice holiness in him. The way he speaks is different. It is not that he is educated. You know that I have not learned much. I barely graduated from a graduate school. I don’t know if any of you would say that I am ignorant. However, in my conversation or after sermons no one says that I am ignorant.

Please do not speak thoughtlessly. Jesus says in Matthew 12:36, “But I tell you that

men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." I don't know what exactly Jesus means by "giving account on the day of judgment." I know that it doesn't mean you will go to hell. However, if you speak worthless words as Christians, you will face a day when you have to give account in heaven. You will be questioned/interrogated. In heaven there is no suffering, pain, and sorrow. I don't know if you get slapped on your face before you enter into heaven. Anyways, if you speak useless words, thoughtless words, and worthless words, you will have to give account on the day of judgment.

Jesus continues in verse 38 "For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." This verse also needs a clear interpretation. What does this verse mean? I covered this in the exposition of book of Matthew. We shouldn't speak useless words and thoughtless words. I emphasized over this, especially in the exposition of Ephesians that the standard of a glorious church is words. God acknowledges those who proclaim with the authority of words. The community with the proclamation is acknowledged by God. This is the reason the training over words is important.

We see many Scripture verses over words we speak, especially in Proverbs (12:14; 13:2) "from the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things." The word of blessings that come out of your mouth will establish your life. James says in 3:1, "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly." This is a great discovery in the medical field in 21st Century. The language center is the biggest part in nerve system. The language center can control all your action. If your speech is complete/perfect, you can control your body in all your ways. Apostle James received revelation about the anatomy of human body 2,000 years ago. Furthermore, James also said that word is fire. It is a wheel of life. Your life can roll like a wheel by your word. Word is not just a word. It is your mark as a person.

The evil comes out of accumulated evil and the good comes out of accumulated good. This is a spiritual order! For example, if you are full of spirit of sexual immorality, the problem is you continue to train/drill your soul through sexual immorality. You speak the immoral words because you are full of immorality. You speak the worldly words because your soul is drilled with worldliness. Since you criticize and judge others, you are full of such spirit and what you have flows out of you. You don't need to discern others. All you have to do is just converse a few words. You can easily find out what they are full of. Please repent of what you have personified in you and continue to remove them from you. Your word reveals your essence. That's the reason Jesus said that what enters inside doesn't contaminate you but what comes out of you contaminates. You have what is defiled inside which comes out via your words. When I see someone who is full of evil spirits, he/she always speaks despairing words and defiling words. What you have inside, the filthy things, are revealed.

Therefore, the ungodly commits what is unrighteousness. The ungodly refers to a person or being and unrighteousness refers to an action. Out of being comes a style. The

godly is one that is full of God. His style/way always expresses God. However, the ungodly is full of other things beside God, so he does things that God is not pleased with. The ungodly things that you have personified must be repented deeply...because they are not easily removed. If you are 30 years old, then you have things that you have personified for 30 years. Things like that are almost impossible to repent. The word is therefore so important.

Gods' servant wearied the Lord with their words. The training of word is important for us. Jesus said in John 12:49, "For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it." Jesus did not speak the words unless the Father commanded Him to. Jesus further said in verse 50, "I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." His command refers to Deuteronomy and even Jesus says what the Father tells Him to say. Furthermore, Holy Spirit according to John 16:13 will not speak on His own but He will speak only what He hears. The Spirit of Creator doesn't speak on His own and only speak what He hears. The training of what and how to speak is so important.

What did I do for 19 years? I learned to speak what I hear from God. It is the same with you. You shouldn't speak without hearing. Many people do things according to their plan, experience, ways, and level without hearing God. If you train to speak after hearing from God for a year, then you will be revolutionized. Why? Because you accept the things of God enabling your structure of mind to operate according to God's system and His level!

According to New Testament when you are seized by the Spirit of God, you are renewed even the knowledge. How does that happen? When the Spirit of God comes inside, He always leads you to hear His things and to speak to them. You already have the indwelling Spirit of God; nevertheless, you have no change because you speak according to your desire. When the Spirit of God comes, He always leads you hear His things and leads you to speak them. Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 2:10 that the Spirit of God exchanges God's affairs and your affairs. How dangerous is speaking your words voluntarily or according to your will! Please get trained to speak after you hear God's words. Proverbs 10:19 "When words are many, sin is not absent." Please don't talk if you don't know the will of God as much as you can help it. If you stay put, you can reach the second place. If you talk, your ignorance is revealed. In short, it is better to refrain from speaking. Gag your mouth. When you speak after hearing the words of God, authority flows out of your mouth. Please stop speaking voluntarily (according to your will) and train yourself to hear first and speak for about a year. You will be revolutionized. You become a person people shouldn't mess with. Why? Because you don't speak your own words but God's words!

John speaks in John 3:34, "For the one whom God has sent speaks his words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit." Since you are filled with the Spirit of God every day, the words of God come out of your filled personality. It comes out of what is overflowing. Like you speak about the words of this world when you are full of world, you speak the words of God when you are filled with His Spirit. Therefore, you should train hearing and speaking

the words of God. You don't want to react with words spontaneously. You have to be slow and steady. Since you have to hear the voice of God and speak His words when someone asks you, it is rather easy to be impatient. Please don't ask our church members to speak fast. I should repent first. I told my wife to speak fast because she speaks so slowly. I am sorry honey. I repent. We all should be training and hear the voice of God first.

This is how we weary God with our words. "Weary" means God is stressed. When a man is stressed, he does some weird things. My oldest son is raising a porcupine and he wouldn't let anyone into his room. The reason for that is when a porcupine is under stress, it will die. Look, when an animal is stressed, it dies from it. When a human being is stressed, he gets sick. He does some weird things like head-butt something. He does something totally out of blue.

God is stressed! God is weary! In the Bible we find two instances where God is stressed. They can be traced to the same root. I think the first one is in Isaiah 43:22 or something like that that God is wearied to forgive so many sins we have committed. We sin, offer sin offering, offer peace offering, and offer trespass offering. It is way too many and it wearies God. Therefore, God is under stress.

The second instance of stress on God is in the main text. Careless words stress God. Please don't stress God and it is not good to stress Him. Israelites respond to God "How have we wearied Him?" They wearied God with their careless words and they say, "When did we do that?" God says two things. First, God says, "You said, 'All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them.'" Second, God says, "You said, 'Where is the God of justice?'"

They are saying that the wicked is blessed. In another word, God is pleased with the wicked. The evildoer is blessed. Their point is "if God reigns in this world, why are the wicked prosperous?" They are saying, "God is not alive!" This is how they defy God. In short, we are dealing with the prosperity of the wicked. We have addressed this topic of prosperity of the wicked in the exposition of book of Habakkuk.

The book of Habakkuk is important to us. I expounded on many things but the issue of prosperity of the wicked comes down to whether God is silent or God is in control. Actually, this is the same issue. We raise a pig for the day to eat it. The prosperity of the wicked is not a big issue. There is no reason for us to envy the wicked for living a luxurious life. If you envy the prosperity of the wicked, God will be stressed. The issue of prosperity of the wicked and the issue of the wicked causing trouble to the righteous comes down to the issue of the righteous. The book of Habakkuk solves all this problem straight away. It is an amazing book. "Why are we not prosperous although we believe in Jesus? We believe in Jesus but why are we living worse/poorer than the wicked?" In short, the prosperity of the wicked is not because the wicked please God in their life but because of the problems of the righteous.

There are several Scriptures we can look at and let's begin with Job. A story of the

wicked is found in Job 21:17 – 25. Job 21 is a dispute between Job and his friend Zophar. Zophar contends in chapter 20 “Job, because you are suffering I know you have sinned.” In chapter 21 Job replies “Why do the wicked still live, continue on, also become very powerful? Their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring before their eyes, their houses are safe from fear.” Job addresses the issue of the prosperity of the wicked. In short, there are numerous occasions when the wicked turn out to be well. Job is furthermore contending that the suffering is not always the result of sin. The prosperity of the wicked is not consummated because the wicked please God or they deserve God’s endless blessings.

We, Christians, should not envy the prosperity of the wicked. Rather, we should have a merciful heart when we look upon the prosperity of the wicked. They boast of a few dollars they possess and handful of authority they have. They mistakenly think what they have is everything in the world. When I see them, I feel pity. It leads me to repent that I haven’t influenced them to stand before God. Instead of hating, cursing, and looking down upon the wicked, when they attack you and pierce you as with thorns, you should realize they are inflicting you because of weaknesses. The servants of God are not saying these things but the nonsense “the wicked is prosperous? Is God real?”

Psalms 73 also addresses the issue of the wicked. The psalmist says in verses 1 – 3, “Surely God is good to Israel to those who are pure in heart! But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling. My steps had almost slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” He was jealous of the wicked and he had almost slipped. The psalmist addresses this issue of the prosperity of the wicked in Psalm 73 and draws a conclusion in verse 17. He says, “Until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end.” He met God first in the sanctuary and God taught him what the prosperity of the wicked was. Then, he learned “Aha, it is nothing!” It is just like the words of Habakkuk. The wicked are investing everything into all nations which will be burned down tomorrow. They are living a foolish life. Some good Christians are envious of the prosperity of the wicked, especially those that live in the rich neighborhood in Seoul. There is no reason for them to be envious. It doesn’t matter how much their property value goes up. What matters is that you have your own place. If you live there, it is your place whether it is a rent or not. Therefore, you don’t have to envy them.

The issue of the prosperity of the wicked is an issue of the righteous. The righteous is the problem not the prosperity of the wicked. The money comes and goes. When you deal with the prosperity of the wicked, you don’t want to say any wicked things like, “God blesses the wicked. If God is truly alive, can He allow this?” The reasons you say those things are because you don’t see yourself and because of immaturity not understanding God’s providence in His silence and the fact that He still reigns regardless.

Did many of you experience surfacing last Sunday? The last message was about “do not divorce and do not abuse your wife. A couple should love each other deeply to receive

godly children." Did you say to yourself, "So, what do you want me to do, pastor?" Did despair surface? The despair surfaced not because of me. They are not my words but the words of prophet Malachi. The word was given to you so that you can repent over it. However, the next question is "what if I already divorced?" From now on let God be the Father and let God be the mother and love each other deeply to have the godly children. That's what you should have done instead of going through surfacing. It is the same principle today. When you come across the prosperity of the wicked, don't let it surface and say loudly, "Is God really alive?" When you hear the word of God, the first thing you are supposed to do is genuinely repent instead of surfacing and arguing. Whenever you have a problem, difficulties in your circumstance, or experience suffering, you are the cause of it. You talk and blame it on God like He is the One that caused it. You also blame it on someone else who is close to the situation. This is all indication of your immaturity.

I am addressing the servants of the Lord who quarrel with God on the issue of prosperity of the wicked. They carelessly speak with other pastors. Some tell dirty jokes. When we meet others, we should speak holy words and meaningful words to everyone. God is stressed! Why? Because the servants of the Lord speak carelessly. Please don't speak thoughtlessly even to your wife and children. Closer they are to you refrain from speaking thoughtlessly. Always speak good words.

I was shocked when I heard a story of this brother. He is very good to his wife. One day he confessed to his wife he had made a mistake against her and repented before her. This news shocked me. That's how it is supposed to be.

This is the end of introduction. God replies to His wicked servants who wearied Him with their words with four answers. It is from 3:1 – 5.

First, the Lord Almighty speaks in verse 1. As I have always said that whenever the Lord Almighty speaks, watch out. God never speaks to us in that manner like "the Lord Almighty speaks..." This is indication that God is upset. "See, I will send my messenger." God speaks of three things about the messenger.

First, God says, "I will send my messenger." The subject is God. He is saying, "I am the One that's sending the messenger and He will prepare the way before me." What does that mean? God will send the messenger and His purpose is to prepare the way before His coming. The first messenger prepares for the coming Yahweh. Isaiah prophesies in Isaiah 40:3, "A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way of for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.'" Just like Isaiah's prophecy God sends His messenger who will prepare the way in the wilderness. This prophecy in turn takes us to another prophecy about the return of Elijah in Malachi 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes." Just like Elijah destroyed 850 prophets of Baal and Ashereh on Mt. Carmel and turned the hearts of Israel back to God the Father, Elijah who didn't see death and ascended to heaven will return, turn the hearts of fathers to sons and

turn the hearts of sons to fathers.

Therefore, the return of Elijah is an important issue to Israel. This is not an issue to us but the mission of Elijah during the inter-testamental period was significant to the Jews. Today, we say grace before the meal but Jews used to say grace after the meal. In their prayer they prayed to God "Send us Elijah!" They also prayed that during the Passover! That's how much Elijah was important to Israel. Jews believed that Elijah, who didn't die and ascended to heaven, will one day return to Israel.

Jesus clearly saw the coming Elijah in John the Baptist based upon the main text in Malachi, Isaiah 40:3, other prophetic books, Matthew 11:10;15, and Mark 1:2-3. Therefore, the fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 3:1 is found in John the Baptist. We also have no hesitation to agree with it. Jesus already said it in Bible, so there is no point in saying otherwise. We have no issue at all to accept John the Baptist as Elijah who prepares the way of Yahweh.

There is one thing I wish to point out when God said, "I will send my messenger." The messenger in 3:1 is a singular whereas Isaiah 40:3 is in plural. What does Isaiah say? He says, "You prepare the way for the Lord in the desert." "You" refers to the messenger and it is in plural form. So, what is the difference? The characteristic of Malachi's prophecy does not address the past, present and future. In another word, Malachi treated the birth of John the Baptist on earth as the coming of Elijah who will prepare the way of the Lord. However, Isaiah and other prophets speak of this as in plural form. Why? Because of Isaiah's and Jeremiah's characteristic in their prophecy. They always address the past, present, and future in their prophecy. The reason they used it in plural form was to emphasize that you have to become the messengers preparing for the second coming of Jesus in the end time just like Elijah descended to prepare for the way of the Lord. Who are the prophets talking to? You and me! Our job is to become spiritual Nazirites to prepare for the coming of the Lord. That's the reason for using the plural form.

Isaiah speaks that the characteristic of end time church's mission is to prepare for the second coming of the Lord. We will see this later but it is raising up the holy and the pure to prepare for the Lord. When the king comes in, it is important to raise up the people who will welcome in the king. That's the difference between Malachi's singular form and Isaiah's plural form. Just like the first coming of the Lord, God will also prepare messengers to prepare for the second coming of Yahweh in the end time. Even now God is preparing His messengers to prepare for His time.

Yulbang Church also has one of those callings. Every church has to fulfill this calling but they are not aware of it. That's why many pastors pastor according to their will and consequently Christians are living their life according to their will. In this urgent moment God is still working to raise up His messengers who prepare the way of the Lord in the world. This is your calling! That's the reason Isaiah sees the messenger as plural; the ones who will prepare

for the coming of the Yahweh the first time and the second time.

Second, who is this messenger? Malachi speaks, "Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come." At the beginning of verse 1 it was in first person but now it is in third person "the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his temple." This is a clear prophecy of the coming of Messiah. "The Lord will suddenly come to his temple." Does this come to you with force? This is striking! For the most part including the book of Matthew the reason for the coming of Jesus was to save the world. Now, where does this Lord come to? He suddenly comes to His temple. This is a tremendous revelation.

The reason Yulbang Church is willing to give up its life for church is the same reason as Isaiah. Isaiah preached the spiritual restoration of Israel and we are also preaching the restoration of church. The prophets didn't say Yahweh is coming to the world but to the temple. It signifies the restoration of church. The Israel is spiritually corrupted and Isaiah is making a clear point that God is coming to establish such a church which will restore the spiritually corrupted Israel. The coming of the Lord to the temple is a surprise. I have expounded through the book of Ephesians that the church is the center of world and the focus is on the restoration of the church which is the spiritual Israel. I spoke this morning over Isaiah 11 that the restoration of the perfect glory of God is the restoration of church. In addition, the restoration of kingdom of love is also the restoration of church. In short, after the collapse of church there is no hope.

Of all the missions we have, Zoe Ministry, whose goal is restoration of church, is like a key move that determines the outcome from God's perspective. There are so many things that are so shameful to bring up... It is now proper to call it a company instead of church. The pastoral ministry is about servanthood; it is supposed to reign over the church according to God's will. However, many churches have transformed into management company. Please remember we have to be willing to die for the church.

There are many prophecies over Jehovah who suddenly comes to His temple. I will just turn to one reference in Ezekiel 43:2 – 3, "And I saw the glory of God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory." This is also prophesied in book of Revelation. The glory of God comes from the east and the sound is like rushing waters. Ezekiel continues in verse 3 "The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. Ezekiel is saying that God he saw was exactly the same as the coming of God who comes to judge. He continues in verse 4, "The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east." The glory of God that judges comes upon His temple. God comes to His temple to restore His temple, to restore His church and to establish the church. The whole focus is on church. God doesn't come to the world.

Isn't that scary? This is our mission. God is revealing through the books of prophets

how the restoration of church, which is spiritual Israel, is worthy of our life. Can you feel my heart? Do you see why I am so crazy about the church to the point of excommunicating church members for the purity of the church? You may think small sins are tolerable and it would be ok to have them in the church. You may ask why the pastor goes after them so harshly and even tell them to leave the church! Why does he do that? Because without the establishment of God's glorious church, the second coming of Jesus is postponed. I have no intention to live here on earth for a long time. I am not saying that I want to die so fast so I can go to God's kingdom. I am saying that Jesus should come very soon. The King wouldn't come without the establishment of glorious church which prepares the way of God. I am not sure whether you desire to live here on earth for 100 years or 1,000 years because you like it but I long to go to God's kingdom as soon as possible. I hate to keep paying taxes when I am living on the land God created like I am living on someone else's land or property. We should soon go to God's kingdom. In order for that to happen God's glorious church that prepares His way should be established first. God's intention is to send Yahweh who will suddenly come to His temple.

Third, who is Yahweh who suddenly comes to His temple? "He is the messenger of the covenant whom you desire." The coming Yahweh is the messenger of the covenant. "Messenger of covenant" is only found in the book of Malachi out of 66 books. This is what makes me sad. We know the book of Deuteronomy had a tremendous influence upon the book of Malachi. You, so, would think the book of Deuteronomy would mention it, but the messenger of covenant is found only in the book of Malachi. This is a unique phrase. Of course, since Malachi's revelation is unique, he could have used it.

However, I can't help but to think that there is an omitted text. The scholars of Yulbang Church should discover things like this. I shared this with you last week that it seems that when Jeremiah scribes, who are of the northern Israel priest line, were left out, such texts were also left out. This is just an imagination. This is probable and I will leave them to the scholars to write their papers on. I would recommend like the studies on the unique phrases in the book of Malachi or the phrase "the messenger of covenant" which was forged out of relationship between the book of Malachi and the book of Deuteronomy.

The messenger of covenant is found only in the book of Malachi. However, is it impossible to interpret it? No! The purpose of his coming is to renew the covenant with the spiritual Israel just like the Israel obeyed and lived by God with it. It refers to the renewal of covenant.

Where can we find the prophecies related to this? God speaks in Jeremiah 31:3 – 4, "The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful.' Virgin Israel refers to the spiritual Israel, church. "I will build you up" refers to the renewal of covenant. "You will be rebuilt!" What is the renewal of covenant in Jeremiah 31? You will

understand it as you read, but it is found in verse 32. Let's trace it from verse 31 "The time is coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,' declares the Lord." Israel broke the covenant of God; therefore, there has to be renewal of covenant. What is the content of the new covenant? We see it in verse 33 "This is covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,' declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people." What does that mean? "I will write my law on their hearts" is a prophecy of upcoming indwelling Holy Spirit. This is the agreement of new covenant. The reason for sudden coming of the Lord to His temple was to renew the covenant of God.

In short, God is saying, "I will send my messenger to My servants who stress me out so much with their mouth and beat their mouth." God will send His messenger who prepares for the coming of Yahweh. This is our mission. Where will Yahweh come to? He will come to His temple and renew churches. The new covenant is about writing God's law on the hearts.

I explained this briefly but this is a shocking revelation of ecclesiology. Sending Yahweh to His temple for the renewal of covenant is a unique revelation. The Scripture could have recorded "God came to this world!" However, it records that Yahweh suddenly comes to His temple. This shows how much God's church is in the middle of world history and national histories. This is why we should be willing to die for His glorious church. This is everything. The focus is all on the Lord in this urgent age of His second coming. So, God sends His messenger.

Second, why does He suddenly come? He comes to judge the Levites who speak carelessly according to verses 2 and 3. This coming is to judge the Levites but the purpose of judgment is not to finish them off. Isaiah kept saying that God will judge you. "If you continue to act up, God will judge you!" However, the intention of God is not to destroy but to renew them. It is for the purpose of refining them. Malachi speaks in verse 2, "But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap." The purpose of judgment is for refinement. God judges to renew not to kill. Therefore, whenever you consider God's judgment or the end time, be sure to remind yourself that God's intention is to renew not to finish off.

I would like to point to "Who can stand when he appears?" The question alludes to a point that he will surely come. Malachi is speaking that Yahweh will absolutely come to judge. It is not whether he is coming or not. He will surely come to judge. Our focus is on who can stand when he comes. We will see this next week that prophet Hagai and prophet Isaiah echo the words of coming Lord in the ears of Israelites who reply "When does he come? Is he not coming at all? Maybe the Lord is lying to us." Verses 6 and 7 which I will address next week speak in the same nuance. Prophets speak, "He will come and He will absolutely come." You ask "When will He come back? You spoke of end time since 2,000 years ago. When is the

end time?" Many people now just take it for granted without thinking like "He may come. He will probably come. He might come." Whether God comes or not is not an issue. The issue is when He does come, are people who can stand before Him prepared or not?

Therefore, God sends a messenger before the coming of Yahweh; however, no one is ready. If Yahweh comes now, everyone is about to go to hell. The Lord can't come now because most can't make it upon His return. It is not a matter of "Is He coming or not?" God works when the time is filled and the glory and majesty He is supposed to receive have not reached the full amount. It is a blessing that He hasn't come yet. However, it is tiresome for people like us.

God is coming for sure. However, are people ready to receive the coming God? The answer is not a single person is ready. That's the reason God refines us. The purpose of judgment is to refine us. The question is how long? Someone may say, "God, it is enough now. Can you come please?" God's goal is to make 100% pure gold. This does not mean God wants everyone to be 100% pure gold. It means that God wants to fill the 100% portion He is seeking. God is waiting for His chosen people to become 100% pure gold by going through the furnace. From our perspective certain measure can be enough, but from God's perspective it comes very short.

I have shared a story of a potter earlier today. When you visit the city of Echun (famous pottery town in Korea), you may find some masterful ceramics to your eyes. However, the potters will pick them up in their hands, stare at them for a little bit, and frown their face. The next thing you know is they smash the ceramics. To our eyes it would be very nice as a flower vase but they shatter it. Why would they do that? The eyes of professionals discover the blemishes. They cannot be satisfied with it. It is the same with us. God shatters us. Until when? Until 100%. You may say, "God, this is enough." Please don't say that. Some may say, "Yulbang Church is good compared to other churches. Church members work on their spirituality. This is good enough." No! We have to continually shatter.

How does God refine them in the text? Malachi speaks in verse 2, "For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap." I shared a story of how to purify gold. In order to remove the impurities from gold, you break down gold in small pieces, put it in flux, and heat it. The impurities will surface. It is the same. You all look similar and no one looks like a trouble maker. Do you know when your true color comes out? You would know when you are refined. Tests come right to you and sufferings come head on. The fake and the genuine will be revealed.

God refines with strong fire like a refiner refines gold. The people God loves more He will refine continually and stubbornly. Please do not long for spiritual comfort. One day we all will enter into the rest. Therefore, please do not seek to live comfortably on the earth. Continue to be refined by fire. Continue to skim the impurities! This is the reason Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 4:12, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which

comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;" (NASV). The men of God will surely face tests. David confessed in Psalm 26, "Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering." Like David we if we are men of God should go through tests and trials continually.

I continue to roll through tests and trials. I prayed this morning to God, "Give me good health, so I can pray more and do even better in ministry..." However, when my body is strong, I find myself lazy. When I consider Zoe Ministry, I don't want to do it because of my ailing body. I wish in my heart "If God increases my health, I can do a good job." However, it is purely my thought. God reserves just enough energy/health for pastoral ministry and for my wife. I can't help myself but to think that a man with two or three wives is a great man. I don't know how that's possible. God leaves me just enough energy for the ministry and for my wife. God might think I would do some stupid things otherwise. God leaves me no energy. I attended an ordination ceremony in independent denomination last week, laid my hands on some people and after the overnight prayer last I had no energy left in my tank. I couldn't do anything else. I think that's why God doesn't increase my health. There is a possibility. Who knows I may go crazy about golf? I think that's why He doesn't give me any energy. Nevertheless, God has relentlessly pecked me for the last 19 years. I wish I could be just filled with God all the time in any circumstance, but suddenly God gives my spirit a dark night. Sometimes I get upset and sulky. I tell Him "I am little disappointed..." However, this is a blessing.

Israel cannot live on without God. It is impossible. Therefore, they shouldn't be surprised at the fiery ordeals which come as testing as were some strange things were happening to them. That's a blessing. That's absolutely a blessing to them. I repeat that Israel cannot live on without God. People who live well without God have a problem. Any moment you don't look to God something different comes in and agonizes you. Live by fixing your eyes on Yahweh.

That's the reason God refines you as pure gold and purifies you as white with the soap. The book of Revelation mentions people with white robe. When you repent all the time, God purifies you with soap like a shiny white garment. It requires deep repentance. Refinement and repentance are always involved in relationship with God. You can see who you are through suffering which leads you to repentance. This is why suffering is excellent and this is why God refines you.

Let's turn our attention to verse three which mentions "refiner and purifier of silver." God just finished talking about the refinement of gold. Why does He start on refining silver? In continuation of verse three, God speaks of purifying the Levites and refine them as gold and silver. The Hebrew verse puts silver before gold. Both Hebrew and Greek languages emphasize something by putting it first. In this case silver comes before gold. English Bible also has silver first. Korean translation sometimes is not so clear. It was a long time ago since I looked at it, so I don't have much confidence. Now, I realize it is true. If English Bible has silver before gold, then the Hebrew Bible would have it in the same order. Why does Malachi men-

tion refining silver? In BC 16th century, the price of silver was higher than gold for a while in Egypt. The reason for the price hike was due to a more difficult process to refine pure silver than pure gold. Refinement of pure silver was more difficult.

I have written down the refining process of silver. It rather has some spiritual significance. First, you have to melt the silver. As I have said earlier it is entering into suffering. This process requires higher heat than for gold. In short, in order to get the pure silver you have to go through a severe suffering. You may say, "I can barely take even what I am going through now. You want me to suffer more?" This is for people God is preparing for His work. I am not talking about those who fall due to their sin. There are some people I think it is about time for them to blossom but for some reason God doesn't let them go. I feel awful for them. However, God clearly intends to use them for His purpose. I wonder sometimes it is about time for him to take off. Why doesn't that happen to him? I am not referring to those who fell by their sin. It seems the time has come for him/her for His Kingdom, but God still doesn't release him/her.

I am grateful that God is using me. It has been over 10 years since I began to work on spirituality, but I am still clueless. I pastor everyday but the membership of church is always around 30. I can understand if the power is not revealed in the ministry. It gets old. I prayed to God all the time "God shouldn't have given me the power if it is like this..." Now, it is much better with the comfort He provided for me. When He was really refining me, I went from 105 kilogram to 75 kilogram. That was an awful time. When God allows such refinement for people, there can be several reasons. When the duration of refinement is long, it is indication of one's character is full of self – confidence. The meaning of full of self – confidence is that you have become your god. When this self – confidence is high, it prolongs the refinement. Moses who was full of self – confidence took 40 years of wandering. The self – confident Paul took 17 years of wandering. Sisters, when you marry a self – confident brother, the suffering will be great. In short, a self – confident person will wander for a long time. Someone like Peter who acknowledged "I am a simple man," wandered for only three years. It is easier on them. The self – confident man needs a strong fire until he is exhausted. I was self – confident in my life which is why he refined me until I was exhausted. God specially gives them a deep night of spirit. That's the trial of faith.

The suffering does not come from the environment. You no longer feel His presence in your life which terrifies your soul. For example, when a baby cries and mom quickly hugs her, she stops crying soon. However, God just lets you continue to cry. He gestures to hug you and stops just short and so forth. When He finally hugs you, you cling to Him so hard that you will never let Him go. The baby understands very well the long night of spirit without her mom. I shared a story of my son this morning. When I took him to a common bath, I accidentally lost his hand in deep water. He sunk in. Since that accident, when I put out my hand, he holds my hand tightly and wouldn't let go. This is what it is like to go into the furnace when the suffering is so severe, when the night of spirit is too dark, and when you no longer can

live without Him. I am not talking about suffering because of your sin but those who have entered into the trial because of their self – confidence. Enjoy your time... Lord, increase the intensity of the fire. Melting the silver requires higher temperature than melting the gold.

Second, you need a process to skim it. The silver gives off oxygen about 20 times of what it originally has. There is not much left afterward. They say about 95% are given off. Only 5% remains. Look at this! It looks fine but once you melt it down, you can only use 5% of it. It is the same with you. You may say to God, "It is enough for me," but when God melts you down, only 5% remains. Don't you suddenly feel the despair rising up inside?

Let's take a look at the book of Philippians 3:7, "But whatever was my profit now consider loss for the sake of Christ." Not having left over is not necessarily bad. Paul continues in verse 8, "What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ." Paul considered everything rubbish and kept giving them up. Look! You gain as much as you give up. How does 95% or 100% loss sound to you? Keep skimming up to that point. You give up all things and continue to give up. Giving up is gaining. There are those who struggle not to give up what they have. Keep giving up and even more. It is all right to give up everything. Look at the pure silver; it has no remaining. That's the reason it is expensive. I have heard the water made by silver is expensive. The water is produced when you refine the 100% pure silver. Silver is more useful than gold. There is nothing more precious than silver when it comes to detecting poison. Of course, the world is so advanced now that we have some poisons that cannot be detected by poison...

Third, the next process is to refine the silver with carbon. At that time charcoal served as carbon. You put the silver into the charcoal fire. Charcoal is made of burnt wood. In short, when the fire of the Holy Spirit is burning intensely, put the cross in. The fire won't go out as long as you put in wood/cross. If you want to put out the fire, all you have to do is stop putting in the firewood. Cross is sacrifice/devotion. It is bearing the cross in your walk. As you continue to supply firewood the fire of the Holy Spirit will continue to burn. Therefore, the cross is self – sacrifice. I mentioned earlier that it is giving up your rights. Jesus is God and yet He gave up His divine rights. He carried the cross!

If there is any deed of faith in Yulbang Church that "deserves" the grace of God, it is giving up our rights to enjoy what is rightfully ours. This, of course, cannot be our righteousness. We continue to give up instead of enjoying them like materials and power. We should start up Zoe Ministry soon. The fire grows stronger when we sacrifice the rights we are supposed to enjoy.

Fourth, passing through the carbon the pure silver emerges. You have to polish it continually because when silver comes in contact with oxygen in the air, it will start corroding. You have to polish it like crazy since it is not easy to maintain/manage silver. God also has a tough time maintaining/managing you. God washes our feet every day. Just like

1 John 1:9 we should confess our sin and repent. How important is the principle of repentance! I am told that blood circulates the body every 15 seconds cleansing it. In addition, every 15 days the cells in our bodies are replaced by new cells. We renew our bodies every 15 days like snake peels off its skin. We become a renewed man physically. Just like we become a totally new people every 15 days, our spirit should be renewed on daily basis relying on the precious blood continuously. Remember, Jesus cleanses us by washing our feet. Not being able to repent means according to John it is fooling yourself and turning God into a liar. Not being able to repent symbolizes spiritual emergency light. It means red light is flashing before your eyes. If you can't repent, you have to use whatever means you can employ to do so. That's how much you are being hardened. Do whatever you can to repent such as fasting or look on God's face. Whatever you can do to repent again! That's polishing the silver every day. Keep polishing it until you can reflect the image of God off it.

When you enter into the holy place and the holy of holies in the temple and look down, you will find nothing on the floor but dirt. The priests spend so much time in the holy place and the holy of holies that there aren't that many sins they can commit. You will also notice in Yulbang Church that not so many people commit infamous sins although there are some. Raise your hand if you tricked someone for a big fraudulent case last week? Did anyone commit adultery behind the back of your wife last week? Did anyone join the mafia and beat someone up last week? We have no one like that. Those who live in the holy place and the holy of holies do not commit such infamous sins. I shared with the young adults before "don't let the sexuality drain all your energy." With a big young adults group the spirit of immorality is going around a bit, so I shared it with them. Most people don't commit such infamous sins. They stand and walk on the dirt; obviously, it gets on their shoes.

Where do they go to wash off the dirt? They all head to the brazen laver to wash off the dirt. While they serve God in the holy place and the holy of holies, dirt is what gets them dirty. When they get dirty, they wash it off at the brazen laver. Do you think the brazen laver has a size? All the other holy articles in temple come with specification of size except the brazen laver. What that means is they can make the laver as big as they want. This also means they can repent as much as they want. More the repentance better it is! Bigger the laver better it is! Go deep in your repentance. This is the process of acquiring the pure silver. May you become the pure silver!

What is the result of judgment? Malachi speaks in verse 4, "Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness." This is the conclusion! The descendants of Levites will be cleansed to bring offerings in righteousness to Yahweh. The offerings in righteousness refer to the offering that's acceptable to God and refer to the worship that's acceptable to Him. How is that possible? It is possible because Levites are now cleansed. Impure spirit cannot offer up an inspiring worship to God in the holy of holies. Why is unacceptable worship so big of a deal? When God doesn't accept your worship, it can be a bigger problem than your death. I hope you can get this in your heart! The matter of your unac-

ceptable worship to God is directly related to your death. Malachi speaks that God cleanses the Levites to receive their offerings in righteousness. Not only God receives the physical offering but also the giver/worshipper. Genesis 4:4 records "the Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering." "The offerings become acceptable to the Lord" means both offerings and the person who offers them are acceptable to God. That's the reason Malachi speaks "as in days gone by as in former years." "Days gone by" refers to the old days when Israel had a right relationship with God. The offerings will be acceptable to God once again and which will be joyful to Him. It is extra ordinary to be a person of joy before God.

You become a joy to God! In the Genesis account we see Jacob lying on the death bed with his sons sitting around him. Who shows up at that time? When Joseph shows up, Jacob springs up from the bed to greet his son and says, "Oh, my son you have come." It was as if he wasn't even sick at all. It is the same with God. When we worship and pray, God springs up to greet some people saying, "Oh my son I am glad you have come." With some people God simply says, "Hi," and turns away. Becoming a joy to someone can mean that a man can give something good out of his joy. John speaks in 1 John 3:22, "And receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him." If God is pleased with us, He can give us anything. That's right! He can give us anything. However, there is something more important than that. He is our everything! A fish out of water may live but a man out of God cannot live. We are acceptable to God! We become a joy to God. This is extraordinary to become a joy to Creator God. Therefore, Paul speaks in the book of Ephesians that when we become a glorious church, we become the praise of His glory. God sings to us "I love you, Michael!" and He continues humming.

Since God rejoices over us, the joy of the Lord becomes our strength. The joy of the Creator God is exchanged between Him and us when He is with us, He rejoices over us, and we also rejoice over Him. The essence is that God first becomes my joy and then I become His joy. This is incredible! Through the judgment and refining processes your soul becomes pure and holy further qualifying you to offer up an acceptable worship to Him. I think better way to say than qualification is that your soul becomes glorious to Him. Suffering is necessary!

I emphasize it! Imagine that your whole week exists for one holy Sunday worship. Deeply repent through the week purifying your soul and worship Him on Sunday. You will experience explosive work of God. The result of judgment is that God accepts our worship.

You become an acceptable man or you please God through refinement and suffering. Different types of people can please God. Who please God in the Bible? It is the pure soul. The pure soul serve God without reason. Good example is Job. Devil speaks to God, "Does Job serve you for no reason? He is serving You for some reason." God agreed to devil "ok, do whatever you want. Take away everything from him if you wish. I tell you even he loses everything and his lip is bruised, he will not complain." Job praised God "naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job didn't serve God for blessings, wealth, health,

children, or anything. His faith was not based on any of them but rather there was no reason. Job served God because he simply liked God so much. Job served God because God was just so good.

“Oh, king Nebuchadnezzar, if we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” God is able will rescue you from your poverty, despair, and every wicked circumstance. Do you believe that? But even if He does not, even if you die in poverty, die in disease, and die in wicked circumstance, will you praise God? It is serving God without proper reason.

Will you be like Habakkuk who was crushed and annihilated by Nebuchadnezzar? Habakkuk said afterward, “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will be joyful in God my Savior.” The motivation of serving God is the Person of God. We call this existential faith.

Mary believed when angel said, “For nothing is impossible with God.” She replied, “May it be to me as you have said.” The virgin becomes pregnant and may face stoning to death but the word of God is everything to her.

Peter who just caught many fish confessed “I am a sinner” and fell down before God. Why did Peter do that? Peter had a mindset “if you say so.” Whether Peter caught many fish or few fish didn’t matter to him. Obedience to the word of God was everything to Peter.

Jesus spoke to servants in John chapter two, “Take this water to the wedding master!” When servants took the water to him, it didn’t matter to them whether the water would turn into wine or not. It was not their concern! Even if it doesn’t turn into wine, so they get scolded or beat up, their job is to take it to him. This is existential faith. The pure soul serves God for nothing and God is pleased with him/her.

If you serve God for worldly reasons and hoping for something from God, your Christian walk will not go deep. Those who are full of self-hope will fall by self-hope. How come Abraham did not grow? Abraham encountered God at the age of 75; however, he still didn’t confirm the promise of His blessing until the age of 130. Why? Because Abraham was full of his self-hope. When Abraham gave Isaac to God beyond the age of 130, God finally said, “That’s enough! Now, you are the father of faith!” If you are full of self-hope, self-ambition, and self-plan, you can’t effectively serve God. Please become a person that serves God for no reason. This is the faith which is produced through refinement and suffering processes. Please don’t pray all the time, “God, don’t let me suffer. Please take care of that for me.” Please pray, “God, if You are going to allow it, please allow it. However, instead of resolving the issue, please give me Your grace that can overcome it.”

I have shared a story of a Korean sister with American passport serving in North Korea through UNESCO. She has a terminal cancer and yet she cooks porridge for 7,000 people three times a day. Her mindset is that "if God lets me die, I die. If He lets me live, I live. I am serving because God give me health." God is everything to her. She is serving because God is so good. This is our aim. This is the pure soul which comes as the result of judgment.

Fourth, Malachi has addressed from verse 1 – 4 with regard to God's servants who wearied Him. Beginning with verse 5 Malachi addresses the judgment of the wicked as for the ordinary people "so I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty."

God will come to those people and judge them. Malachi mentions 7 different evil things. Everyone understand them! They are recorded in participle forms instead of verb. Why is that significant? Because it means that those evils have become a habit. They are so used to them. They don't sin accidentally but the body has personified those sins. In order to destroy the personified sins God comes to judge them. The penalty of sin is death for you but the habitual sin carries heftier penalty. If you accidentally commit a sin and genuinely repent, God immediately resolves it. However, habitual sin is difficult for you to repent. It is so difficult to repent because you are deluded that it is a part of who you are. You think "why should I repent over it?"

On one hand, some sins come with severe punishment like sorcery and adultery. On the other hand, other sins are not so clear whether they deserve severe punishment like cheating workers of their wage and not honoring God. The punishment for these sins doesn't seem to carry death penalty. If you don't honor God and realize such sin carries death penalty, then you wouldn't even commit it to begin with. For us sorcerers and adulterers seem reasonable to receive death penalty. We are aware understandably that those sins are really bad sins. However, perjurers, defrauders of wage, oppressors of orphans and widows and not honoring God are not type of sins which would lead you wail, cry, and repent because of your awareness of death penalty. How come don't you cry and repent and have fear of such sin? Because you are so used to it. It is not that those sins are not serious. You do not feel the weight of seriousness of those sins because they have already become your habit. Malachi wrote them in participle form to stress that they are personified. God comes to destroy the habitual sins. Can you say to a gigolo, "Don't you know that your life as a gigolo is a very serious sin?" People know it is a bad thing but they don't know it is a sin punishable by death.

Where do we have this in the Bible? We see in the book of Luke that a man is forgiven of 10,000 talents. He forgets the weight of his sin which was 10,000 talents. That's the reason right after his forgiveness he grabs the neck of another man who owes him hundred denarii. He knows his sin was bad but he didn't know how critical his sin was (equivalent to 10,000 talents). 10,000 talents are sins worthy of 20 billion dollars. The sin has become a habit so

you are not aware of how terrifying this sin is.

Those that live by God are like this Korean poet Dongju Yun who said, "I am tormented by the wind that blows on a leaf." If you live by God, you will be sensitive to small sins as little as dust in the air. Priests in the temple were sensitive to consider the dirt on their shoes in the holy place and the holy of holies as a serious sin for them to warrant a trip to a laver for cleansing. Today, sins have become a habit for many of us, so we don't know the dire consequence of it and its seriousness. Most of all, repentance is impossible! If you neglect them, you become almost insensitive to them. At that stage it is now impossible to repent. For them it is like "Ahha, my life is now over!" It is like a spiritual AIDS. AIDS refers to reaction to critical germs. It is basically taking in every sin. If you don't repent your habitual sins... You ought to deeply repent of sins you commit habitually, but practically speaking it is impossible to do so. Please repent.

Let's conclude this message. The refining process for silver is important. As a part of introduction I have shared with you not to speak carelessly. There is an authority to word. May God bless you to speak pure words, holy words, and complete words. God listens to every word you speak. In another word, please don't speak carelessly thinking no one is listening to you. Next, the messenger will come. This is a renewal of covenant and a renewal of church. In short, the messenger will come for the renewal. When he comes, he will purify the church. Yahweh will come to His temple for renewal. He will receive your worship. Building up a pure church is worthy of everything we have. He comes to purify the Levites. Please consider the refining process for pure silver. The result of judgment for God is to receive the righteous offering and to judge the habitual sins of the wicked. Please repent meditating upon the word.

10 . MALACHI (6)

3 : 6 - 12

6."I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

7.Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

8."Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings.

9.You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me.

10.Bring the whole tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

11.I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty.

12."Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

Malachi (6) 3:6-12

“How are we to return to God?”

The book of Malachi is an extremely important book. Through Malachi, we are supposed to see the new glory with respect to worship. Today we are going to look at the question: “How are we to return to God?” Today’s dispute is about repentance. We will look at how we should repent.

First, we need to know what kind of heart the Israelites had. Ezekiel, Zechariah, Isaiah, and the other super-star prophets all prophesied that the day of the glory of the Lord was coming. But He had not yet come back. So the Israelites are complaining about not seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy. “The day of the Lord” means that God was definitely coming back. These prophets said that God will return in order to lead us into His glorious kingdom. But God had not yet returned. The Israelites got tired of waiting for the Lord’s return. So they thought that God had changed His mind about returning. This is truly amazing; if it were us, we would think that the prophecies were wrong. But the Israelites did not think these prophecies were wrong, but rather the reason the prophecies were not fulfilled was because God had changed His mind. The prophets heard God’s voice clearly, but the reason is God had a change of heart. So when God says in 3:6, “I the LORD do not change,” He means that He has not changed his mind. The Israelites thought that He changed, but God is confirming that He does not change.

Does God change? No, once God makes up His mind, He never changes it. God never changes. We saw in chapter 1 that God still loves us. But just as they accused God of not loving them, the Israelites thought that God had changed. They thought that He had changed his decision and was not coming again. This was the state of the Israelites’ hearts. They did not know the love of God.

Just as it was the issue with the Israelites, the root of all our problems is the issue of love. If we loved God alone, there would be no problems. All the problems of our children, of our faith, and of our lives exist because we do not love only God. It is because we love other things that we have these problems.

In verse 9, God says, “You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me.” Because the Israelites had a problem, the whole nation was cursed. Everything was decaying. The source of this curse was that the Israelites did not love God alone. Who are the true Israelites? The people who cannot live without God. Why can they not live without God? It is not because God gives them good things but because there is the thrill and excitement that comes from God’s love.

Think about whether or not you can live without the person you love. I cannot live without my wife. I mean, yes, I could live because of the Lord. But what is love sickness? It is the disease you have because you cannot be with the person you love. That is love. Love

is being unable to live without your beloved. So even though there is no virus and there is nothing wrong with your body, you can die from the grief and sorrow of love sickness.

If you are in love, then you cannot live without the person you love. It is the same for the Israelites: they cannot live without God because they know how passionate God's love is. The reason they said God had changed was because they forgot His love. Even the people of this world wait for their lovers. So there is no way that God would ever change. However, the Israelites doubted and rejected God's love, so they were cursed.

Everything begins with love. If we love God, then there is no problem in the world that will be a problem to us. The Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles had the same perspective. In 1 Corinthians 16:22, Paul says, "If anyone does not love the Lord – a curse be on him!" That's what he said! Isn't that scary? How great is the sin of not loving God that Paul would ask for a curse? Paul saw the same thing that the prophets did: he saw that all of life's problems come from not loving God. That's why the apostles and prophets had the same flow.

"Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come" means that the people who love God should eagerly wait for His return. In that time waiting for the Lord's coming was the best virtue in the Christian faith. That's why we say maranatha for the Lord's coming. Marana means "our Lord," tha means "come". So maranatha means, "Come, O Lord".

The Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles understood this from the same perspective. The Israelites had problems in their lives because they did not love God alone. In fact, if we truly love God, the problem of "What to eat?" will not become a problem for us at all. When a man and a woman love each other, they move into a small house designed for one person and they are happy living together in a cramped room. If we love God like this, there will be no problems.

God does not change. But now He is about to make an ironic statement. "I, the Lord, have not changed." But who also has not changed? Look at the first half of verse 7: "Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them." What is this? Just as God's love for the Israelites never changed, the Israelites themselves also did not change. Whether before or now, they are still habitually committing sin. This is the irony that God is pointing out. He is saying, "My love for you has not changed, but you guys are still sinning just as you always did."

What is the evidence for God's love? Even though the Israelites habitually committed sin, God says in the second half of verse 6, "So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed." This means that because God loves them, He has not destroyed them for their habitual sins. If I were God, I would have already destroyed them. However, God did not destroy them yet. Why? Because He still loved them. So even in chapter 1 God said, "I have chosen you, Israel." The evidence for that was the destruction of Edom. The Edomites were attacked by the Nabateans and became a nameless and wandering tribe, but God still had

not destroyed the Israelites. That was the evidence for His love for them.

How great is each person's sin! They were supposed to be destroyed. We must wake ourselves up and deeply repent. If we do not repent, then we will be destroyed. So the Lord is saying, "The reason you are not yet destroyed is because I want to show you evidence that I still love you." And He is also saying, "The reason I have not yet come is not because I no longer want to come to you, but it is because you have not returned to me." God says in verse 7, "Return to me, and I will return to you." God's mind has not changed. He is saying, "You must first return to me. If you do not return to me, I cannot come to you." We can ask, "Why don't you come first, God?" but that is not the spiritual principle.

The issue of the Lord's return is not a problem of time, but rather even if the Lord comes, there is no one prepared to receive Him. In these circumstances, if the Lord were to come back right now, how many saved people would He find in the Korean churches? This is what He is talking about. Just as it says in 1 Timothy 2:4, God's will is to bring salvation and truth to all people. God's will is not for people to be destroyed when He returns, but rather His will is to establish many children of God. But if He were to return right now, we would all receive judgment and be destroyed. That is why God cannot return. If three or four atomic bombs fell on Korea right now, exactly how many people would survive? Even if people survived, there wouldn't be that many people left. It's the same thing: If the Lord returned right now, there should be many people who welcome Him with joy, but as of right now everyone would die. Everyone would receive judgment. That is the reason why He cannot return. Because He is the God of love, His will is not judgment and death. But if He came right now, everyone would be destroyed.

"Return" in Hebrew is shuv. Shuv is the same as "repent". Repentance means coming back into God's embrace. Just as the prodigal son repented and came back into his father's arms, repentance is turning back. Repentance means receiving correction and turning back.

A long time ago, one of our church members was about to take the train somewhere. She was listening to my sermon. Just as she was about to ride the train, she heard me saying, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" and she suddenly realized that she left the gas stove on at home. So she turned around, went back home, and turned off the stove. This is repentance. She was going in one direction, had a realization, completely changed her direction, and returned home.

"Return!" Shuv! You were going in the direction of the world, in the wrong direction, but then you return to God's embrace. That is repentance. In Malachi, repentance means restoring the deep and close relationship with God. It means restoring intimacy with God. God wanted to return to the Israelites. He wanted them to return to Him, to restore their intimacy with Him, to restore His love and relationship with them. But He could not return to them because then they would be destroyed. Even now, when God returns is not important. What matters is whether or not you are prepared to receive Him as a beautiful and pure soul when He returns. It would be no problem to God if He were to return to the Israelites; rather,

it would be a problem to them.

If there is a problem, we should not say, "God, you are the problem!" like the Israelites did. Who is the problem? We are. Look in Isaiah 59:1-2. "Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." God is not deaf nor is His arm too short to save you. We are supposed to be ready to receive Him, but we are not able to because we are in the midst of sin. Once the clouds are cleared away, then the sun will shine its light. As such, we must clear away the clouds that have gathered in our souls. We must return first to the Lord so that when He comes, it will be good for us. But if we do not return to Him and He returns to us, then we will die. Repent. Only if we repent God can return to us. We must return to God first. That is why repentance is such an important issue.

However, if you do not repent, it means that your soul is dying. If you cannot repent, either you are making God a liar or you are deceiving yourself. This is something that should burn your ears. That is how important repentance is. All grace, spiritual gifts, power, and blessings are empty and useless without repentance because there will be a time when all those will disappear from your life. So without repentance, the indwelling Holy Spirit cannot come upon your heart. When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, then the God who moves the history of the nations and the history of the world will be with you and will rise up from inside you. So there will only be benefit if God reigns over you. Otherwise, without repentance, the presence and work of the Holy Spirit stops when the moment is over.

The characteristic of the indwelling Holy Spirit is continuing to repent deeply in us. There is so much danger if all we do is raise our hands and rejoice and praise God. No matter what conference or revival service or organization you attend, your repentance must be on a deep level. When you hear the word of God, you must realize your own wickedness and how you are a sinner before God. Then the indwelling Holy Spirit must reign over you and come upon you so that God can use you. We tend to mistake the presence of the Holy Spirit as our own power. So when the moment has passed, nothing is left: you still remain in your sin and you do not change. That is why the proclamation of the truth is so important. Praise and worship conferences are especially dangerous. The people who attend praise and worship conferences make such a big deal over the Holy Spirit's presence that falls there. But many praise and worship conferences end as only entertainment. The Spirit comes and falls upon them through the anointing for the sake of His glorious name. However, it should not end there. At all costs, the descending Holy Spirit must match up with the indwelling Holy Spirit. We must deeply repent of our inner wickedness. We do not repent because we just enjoy the presence of the descending Holy Spirit but we do not eat the Word through the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. So we do not change. We must be careful. We must continue to repent deeply and make the indwelling Holy Spirit reign over us. This is so important.

True spirituality has nothing to do with profit. True spirituality is about becoming the person who knows how to serve God. However, this is impossible without repentance. If you

think God does not serve your personal profit, there will certainly come a time when you will reject God. The reason is that if we do not pluck out the evil desires (for possession, security, achievement, fame and worshipping idols) inside of us through repentance, then yes, we will serve God in the good times. We will say, "God, you are King. You have blessed us." But if He does not profit us, we reject God.

Think about it. If God takes away even a little bit of money, there are definitely some people among you who will reject Him. If God takes away some people or gives a little suffering, there are people among you who will say, "There is no God." God is not God just because He gives blessings and grace to you. That kind of god is Baal. We should not say God is God because He is profitable to us. This is the confirmation of salvation without repentance. Even without repentance, you can use spiritual gifts without limit in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Just because you manifest some spiritual gifts, you deceive yourself and think you are saved. We cannot enter heaven with this kind of confirmation of salvation. Satan doesn't even bother tricking the soul that has this kind of useless confirmation. That's because that person will be destroyed even if he's left alone, so Satan doesn't even have to do anything.

C. S. Lewis said that for the person who is going to hell, the demons help that person have a good religious life. They give him what he wants, then give him some suffering, and then release him from that suffering, and so on. In this way, the demons have so much fun with the person who has the false confirmation of salvation. There are so many pastors who are this way too. They take no responsibility for the souls. The characteristic of their churches is gathering many in numbers. Their goal is to have large numbers and become famous.

There are so many people in the news who shock me. One person's schedule is having revival conferences for 365 days in the year. He has no break. Another person scheduled a conference to run even until Saturday. These people are amazing. I have no idea when they have time to pray. It looks like they will die from preaching all the time and go to hell. I want to see what kind of people stick to these pastors. God will seek the people's blood price from their pastors (Acts 20:26). Isn't that scary? I really do not want anyone from our church to go to hell. If I am accountable for their blood.... My spine shivers. This is truly scary.

Does the cart pull the horse or does the horse pull the cart? It is the horse that pulls the cart. In the same way, repentance is what pulls our Christian lifestyle forward. This is how important repentance is. If the truth is not properly proclaimed, then repentance cannot lead our lifestyles. Power, spiritual gifts, blessings – these things are the cart. Without repentance, they are useless. If someone suddenly becomes wealthy without dedicating to God or praying or being a pure soul, then that's not the blessing of God but rather it is Satan's strategy. To one person, both having and not having are blessings; but to another person, both having and not having are curses. If you have a lot of something even though you are not an upright soul before God, then that something is a curse. This is scary. As for the Israelites, the issue of shuv was a very important issue. Since they did not repent in this way, they doubted God's love and said that He had changed His mind. Think about it. I told you last time that we must

be careful of our words. How dangerous do you think these kinds of words are? "It looks like God doesn't love me anymore. I don't think God's listening to my prayer." These are words that doubt God's love. These words are saying, "God, you've changed!"

I will say it again. If there is a problem, the problem is with you. If you cannot feel God's love, then the problem is with you. You have to clear away the clouds in your heart. We are supposed to see the new glory in God's amazing grace and offer Him worship. But if we do not do so, then who is the problem? If during the worship, glory falls upon one person but it doesn't fall upon me, does that mean that God is discriminating against me? No, the problem is with me.

The reason you are not blessed by the worship is in Mark 4, the parable of the sower and the seeds. "There are 10 kinds of blessings to receive in today's service, so it's ok if I don't receive any" is not the issue. For those who do not have anything, even what they have will be taken away. We must receive grace exactly when God gives it and be blessed by it. If you do not feel His presence or His love and you cannot pray, the problem is with you.

Now you know how scary it is to live the Christian life with self-confirmation? It is so important to hear the truth and receive the confirmation of salvation from an objective perspective, not from your own perspective. "Ah, I was blessed once by the indwelling Holy Spirit, so I'm saved." Please do not fool yourself in this way. Just as 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith," we must live by confirming the lifestyle that comes from righteousness by faith. The person who is blessed by the worship only every once in a while but still lives in wickedness and lives with his own self-confirmation – even Satan won't touch that person because that person is going to fall into destruction on his own anyway.

I will say it again. Not just anybody can enter the Kingdom of God. The road to God's Kingdom is the narrow path. If we become revolutionized and changed into pure and holy souls according to God's will and plans, only then can we enter the Kingdom of God. If it is not that way, then why does the Kingdom of God even exist? If it is not that way, then we should just live on this earth. You must keep this in mind. You might ask, "Pastor, then isn't the door of salvation too narrow?" Don't make me laugh! Look at the Bible. The door of salvation is so narrow that it is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God's Kingdom. What does this mean? It means that we cannot enter God's Kingdom without depending on God alone. It is the narrow path. If you find in the 66 books of the Bible somewhere that says anyone can enter God's Kingdom, let me know so that I too can live a little on the wide path. The Israelites are the people who cannot live without trusting God in every moment. The destination for the true Israelites is God's Kingdom. The true Israelites are the people who live completely soaked in the Holy Spirit and in the Word and whose way of existence is living by God. This is the true Israel. The Kingdom of God belongs only to such people. If it is not that way, then I don't want to go to God's Kingdom. I really hope that you do not have the self-confirmation that comes from your own delusions and then mistakenly

believe that you will enter God's Kingdom.

The righteous shall live by faith. I talked about this with Ephesians, so we must clearly receive the confirmation of salvation. Those who are saved shall live like this. Those who are saved will work out their salvation with fear and trembling like Philippians 2:12 says. They will move forward step by step and through God's grace, peace, and amazing love they will become new every day. This is the evidence that you have the confirmation of salvation. Who has been chosen? Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 1:3-4, "Through your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope, I know that you have been chosen by God." These three things must become a reality in our lives every day. We must meet the glorious God who approaches us newly day by day. If we do, then we will have the relationship with the "I AM WHO I AM," the eternally present God. The person who has this relationship is the man or woman of God. If you say, "I got saved 20 years ago, so I'm saved," and you live however you want, then you do not have the true confirmation of salvation. If you have truly experienced God's perfect love, then there is no way you can live for one second outside of His love.

"I used to attend church, but right now I'm taking a break." Just as you say, that literally means you are taking a break from attending church, not from believing in Jesus. If you truly believe in Jesus, you cannot take a break. If you truly meet Jesus, you cannot deny the Jesus who is endlessly approaching you. You can say, "I feel so tired and I'm suffering so much. I don't want to believe in you anymore, God." But then if you truly meet the Lord, you will say, "Everything I said before was foolish talk, God." And then you meet Him again and again. We must have the confirmation of salvation. As the children of God, we all must be able to receive the glory that struck Paul at Damascus. If Jesus' love is similar to your spouse's love, then that is not really God's love. God's love is not similar to your parents' love either. God's love should make you say, "WOW!" You should have the confirmation of salvation. The people who live with their self-confirmation from their delusions will know if they have been saved only when they die. So I tell them, "You'll know when you die. After you die, if you see white then you've gone to the right place, but if you see darkness then you've gone to the wrong place." That is why it is so important for the perfect truth to be proclaimed in the church. We must be able to confirm our salvation with the perfect truth. Because of their corruption, all the Israelites were doomed. So the Lord could not return to them.

In the last half of verse 7, God says, "Return to me, and I will return to you," and the Israelites ask, "How are we to return?" They were asking, "How are we supposed to return? How are we supposed to repent?" They were so corrupt that they could no longer repent before God. This in fact is the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. This means God must put an end to them. But He does not. Why? Because He still loves them.

Think about today's Christians. They cheat others, prey on others, and enjoy the corruption in this world. Yet they say, "I'm going to heaven." Do you think they will be able to go to heaven? Do you think they truly have the confirmation of salvation? I don't think so. This

is what the Israelites were like. They didn't know how to repent. That is why they asked how to repent. It is the same with us. We say, "All you have to do is attend church. What is so hard about salvation? Just serve the church, work hard, give offerings, and attend worship service." These have become our confirmation of salvation. Is that the true confirmation of salvation? No.

You must remember this. If we do not stand before the perfect truth of God's word and if we do not live by God alone, we will have no joy and excitement in entering God's Kingdom. Not only will entering God's Kingdom be a problem, but we will no longer be entrusted with His glory. If we do not live the right lifestyle, how can we even mention God's glory? Show me the book of the Bible which says that we can enter His Kingdom and receive His glory without living according to God's truth. There is no place in the Bible that says such a thing.

These corrupt Israelites were at the point where they couldn't repent anymore, which is why they asked, "How are we to return?" It is such a pity, so the Lord talks about tithes and offerings because those are the signs of repentance. Verse 8 says, "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'" God is talking about tithes and offerings. But why tithes and offerings? The whole nation was corrupt and decaying. In the midst of all this wickedness, these people wouldn't be able to even listen if God talked about some of their other sins. The easiest thing to talk about is tithes. Also, what is God's intent when He talks about tithes? He is saying that not tithing is the fundamental sin.

The Israelites asked, "How are we robbing you, God?" The reason they did not offer tithes is that they lived self-centered lives. Everything in this universe belongs to God, but the reason you do not tithe is because you think you own something. All time belongs to God, but the reason you violate the Lord's Day is because you think your time belongs to you. That is why the person who says, "Me, my, mine" a lot is a dangerous person. The people of God do not acknowledge that they possess anything, such as "my" money, "my" time, "my" church. Sometimes even pastors say, "This is my church." Or they say, "These are my sheep." When they say that, they are making themselves into God. You know that God never gets off His throne. The reason is He knows someone will try to take His spot! When a lay member approaches God's throne, He gets up and shakes their hand; but when a pastor approaches the throne, God doesn't even get up nor shake hands but only receives a greeting. If you keep saying, "Me, my, mine," then you are robbing God! Everything in this world belongs to God, so if you think that something belongs to you and not to God, then you are stealing from Him.

So why talk about tithing? There are so many sins, but the most fundamental sin is thinking that your life belongs to you. It is because of this problem that God is talking about tithes. Also, tithing is the easiest task to obey. Why is tithing important? Through the prophet Malachi, God brings up the subject of tithing while He is telling the Israelites to repent. I will explain tithing through what the Old and New Testaments say, so if anyone has doubts about tithing, they should listen. Let us look at the exact explanation for tithing.

Let us see what the Old and New Testaments say tithing is. Tithing was the system of taxation used in Israel, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and all throughout the Palestinian region. So, in 1 Samuel 8:15, the prophet Samuel says that the king will take tithes. But Samuel was upset at the Israelites because they were asking for a king. The LORD Himself was supposed to be their king, but the Israelites were corrupt and they wanted to become like the other nations. That is why they asked for a king. So Samuel was telling them that a person who is king will take away tithes of grain and land from his people. This means that the other nations were practicing the system of tithing as well. Tithing was not a system that the Israelites developed. Anyways, the Bible does not mention tithing very often. Only 17 books of the Bible talk about tithes. Tithing is an extremely small part of the Bible.

So, let us look at Genesis 14:20. Abram has just waged war and brought back the plunder, but then he offers a tenth of it to Melchizedek. At that time, in the ancient Near East, the custom was to offer the plunder to the priests of the gods he served. So Abram gave the plunder to Melchizedek. This is explained more in the book of Hebrews. But, even though Abram made this offering, in the beginning of Israelite history there was no law that demanded tithes. Exodus 20 does not talk about tithes. So there was no such law in Israel in the beginning.

However, look at Numbers 18:21. For the first time, God clearly establishes the law concerning tithes. "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting." What does this mean? It means that tithes began for the sake of the Levites' ministry. This is clearly talking about tithes.

Now let us look at Deuteronomy 14:22. "Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that you fields produce each year." So the law of tithing is established in Numbers and Deuteronomy. But even so, did the Israelites always offer tithes? No, they did not. When there was spiritual corruption, they would not tithe. But when there was revival, they would tithe again. Let me say it again. If there was corruption, there were no tithes. But if there was revival, then there were tithes again.

Now the important matter comes up. In Amos, the northern Israelites offered tithes very well. But God hated their offerings. The Bible is showing the historical record for the Israelites' tithes. Amos 4:4-5 says, "Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings – boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do." What is God saying? Just because you tithe doesn't mean that God will be happy.

Look at 5:21-22. "I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them." Now it's not just tithes: no matter what they offered, God did not accept it. God was sick of their offerings,

especially their abundant tithe offerings. Why? No matter how many tithes they brought, the Israelites did not change in character or in lifestyle. As God looked on their society which was full of corruption, He did not accept their offerings because they were acting like the Gentiles who gave tithes to their idols. This was the problem. They made offerings that had nothing to do with their character and without offering up their lives. They gave tithes so that they would receive some money or blessings. They had such greedy hearts, so God did not accept their tithes.

On the other hand, in the days of Hezekiah, the people offered abundant tithes and God gladly accepted their offerings. Look at 2 Chronicles 31:5-7. "As soon as the (king's) order went out, the Israelites generously gave the first fruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. The men of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps. They began doing this in the third month and finished in the seventh month." It took 4 months for them to count all the tithes that were offered. Consider this: the people who are not blessed will think, "How can anyone offer that much?" But those who are blessed will say, "God has given us such a blessing that we are able to offer this much." There was a religious reformation during Hezekiah's reign, so the Israelites lived the upright lifestyle before God. For that short period, the state of their souls was pleasing to God, and since they offered a great amount to Him, how blessed were they! They were so blessed that they were able to pile up their tithes very high.

For your information, 1 & 2 Chronicles and 1 & 2 Kings are completely different from each other. You might ask, "Why were 1 & 2 Chronicles written? Isn't 1 & 2 Kings enough? Is there really a need to write the same history twice?" Actually, Chronicles and Kings are different. 1 & 2 Kings were written by those in the prophetic order, but 1 & 2 Chronicles were written by the descendants of Zadok in the order of Aaron. So they are completely different from each other. In 1 & 2 Chronicles, Solomon and Hezekiah are heroes. But in 1 & 2 Kings, Solomon was the main cause of the Israelites' corruption; and Hezekiah showed the Temple's treasures to the Babylonian envoys and was the main reason those treasures were taken away. Nevertheless, in 1 & 2 Chronicles, Solomon and Hezekiah were great men. So each book has its own perspective. Each author wrote the truth and they each had their own intentions. Anyways, in 2 Chronicles, God was pleased to receive the tithe offerings in the days of Hezekiah.

After their return from exile, the Israelites did not offer tithes faithfully. Whenever they had the slightest chance, they did not offer tithes. In the days of Nehemiah, they started offering tithes again. Nehemiah 10:38-39 says: "A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms where

the articles for the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay. We will not neglect the house of our God." The Israelites gave tithes when Nehemiah was around.

Nehemiah 12:44 says, "At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, first fruits and tithes. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites." So while Nehemiah was with them, they continued to offer tithes. But, when Nehemiah went back to Babylon for a little while, around B.C. 432, these corrupt Israelites stopped tithing again because their leader was not with them. Anyway, this is what they did at every opportunity they got.

Look at 13:10. "I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields." Tithes are supposed to be given to the Levites so that they will be faithful in serving God. But since the tithes no longer came, the priests ran away to become farmers. Tithes are truly important. The Levites should have received the tithes so that they could bless the lay people to receive God's abundant blessings. But since the Levites didn't receive the tithes, they ran away. The people offered tithes when Nehemiah was there but didn't when he wasn't there. This was what happened during the post-exilic period.

Then what about the Inter-Testamental period? The Bible does not mention this period, but we can read about it in the Mishnah and the Talmud, which are the Jewish books that interpret the Torah. There was the Talmud that came out of Babylon and the Talmud that came out of Israel. The Babylonian Talmud was completed in the 7th century A.D. and it has a much deeper insight than the other Talmud. It interprets the Law sentence by sentence. Anyways, the Babylonian Talmud mentions tithing. Also the Mishnah mentions that vegetables, fruits, and all the products of the fields were used as tithe offerings. So we know that the Israelites had to give tithes. Also, around 70 A.D., during the Roman invasion, the last stage of the Jewish resistance was at the fortress of Masada. Rather than being killed or taken captive by the Romans, all the Jews there committed suicide. But if we look there, they did commit suicide because they were starving. Their storehouses were full of the tithe offerings. Even if it meant death, they did not touch God's tithes. That is how thorough the Jews were about tithes.

Let us move on to the New Testament. Look at Matthew 23:23. "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former" There is a reason I have picked this passage. Why does Jesus talk about tithes here? He is talking about the spirit of tithing: justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

The same thing appears in Luke as well. 11:42 says, "Woe to you Pharisees, because

you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone." Jesus Christ is emphasizing the spirit of tithing, which is the zedekah justice. He is emphasizing emet, faith. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." It is better to not offer tithes to God rather than offering tithes without love and faith, just to get some blessings like the pagans did. But, "practice the latter without leaving the former undone." So we should offer tithes without neglecting zedekah (righteousness), emet (faith), qadosh (holiness), and hessed (love). We must offer our tithes with sincere hearts.

Luke 18 compares the prayers of the Pharisee and tax collector. According to verses 11-12, the Pharisee prays, "God, thank you that I didn't steal any tithes from You, but offered everything faithfully." But God was not pleased with his offering because he offered tithes without true repentance.

The book of Hebrews mentions tithes as well. Chapter 7 mentions tithes, but tithing is not the main point. In verse 7, it says, "And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater." That is to say, the greater person blesses the lesser person. This is a comparison of Jesus as a priest versus the Levites as priests. So in verse 10, it says, "when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor." The Levites were the descendants of Abraham. Abraham offered the tithe to Melchizedek. So who is greater: Jesus, who is in the order of Melchizedek, or the Levites who descended from Abraham? Jesus, who follows in the order of Melchizedek, has the higher priestly position; so when we offer tithes, we are supposed to receive blessings through Him who is greater. His ministry is different than the ministry of the Levites, who were just lowly humans. The focus of Hebrews is not on tithes; its focus is on "Who has the higher position?" The priestly ministry of the Levites cannot even compare to the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ, who is in the order of Melchizedek. There is no comparison at all. The evidence for this is that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek and received the blessings from him.

So, what is the conclusion? Whether is it in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, the issue of tithing is not about "Should I tithe or not?" Listen very carefully. If you hear this message in the wrong way, you will feel even more burdened to offer tithes even though you already have trouble tithing. Both the Old and New Testaments do not say that the issue of tithing is about whether or not you do it. As I said earlier, the issue of repentance is about the issue of God's love. The love, grace, power, and glory God has given us are not based on our serving Him conditionally. Rather, if you offer tithes but you do not have upright faith before God, then you are causing God pain. If you do not have the righteousness, faith, love, and holiness as the New Testament says, then God does not want you to give tithe offerings. After all, that was why the Pharisees became corrupt. The people who have received God's love do not see the issue of tithing as a problem of "Should I tithe or not?" That is because, in front of the Lord who is the owner of all things and of all time, I own nothing. Do you think

it is impossible to offer two-tenths or three-tenths to God instead of just one-tenth? No, it is wrong for us to think of tithing as “Should I do it or not?,” because we are living in the New Testament times and we have the presence of the wonderful Spirit of God inside of us.

Do you think it is impossible to offer nine-tenths to God? There was a CEO of K-mart who recently passed away. He owned 2700 departmental stores. He offered nine-tenths of all he had to God. He prayed and asked God even when spending \$10. Why? He was testifying that he owned nothing. You should make the decision to offer nine-tenths. The reason is because tithing is not about whether or not you tithe. You must resolve to use everything you have for God. If this is too difficult for you, start with offering two-tenths.

Keep this in mind: the person who makes conditions for God and who uses God for his own profit is not saved. God is the one who gave Job everything he had, and He is also the one who took everything away from him without any reason. So you must not offer tithes to God because you want blessings. Don’t attach conditions to your tithes.

Now we return to Malachi. God says to test Him. What does this mean? If God tells you even to test Him, it means your life is over. We can never test God. No matter what the issue is, if we say that we serve God conditionally, then our lives are over. I am not just emphasizing tithes. This is about how you must offer your entire life to God. You cannot offer God the money or time you have left over after you have used everything else. That’s not what I’m talking about. It’s not just about offering tithes.

If we look over the overall perspective of the Old and New Testaments, we can see the conclusion concerning tithes. In the Old Testament, we can see that just because the Israelites offered abundant tithes to God did not mean God was pleased. And even more so in the New Testament, Jesus was not pleased by people just offering tithes. In the spirit of the amazing love of God that Deuteronomy shows, tithing is about giving God everything by faith, not offering tithes like pagans did to their idols so that they would receive some blessings or favors. If we think about God’s love and glory, we cannot offer to Him like to some pagan god and ask for blessings. God is not that kind of god. So is it impossible to offer nine-tenths to Him? What’s wrong with offering even everything we have? That is the love for God. Giving an offering to God should not be burdensome. Even though the woman broke her alabaster jar and poured expensive perfume on Jesus’ head, that offering was not enough for her. We can keep on offering and offering to God, but it can never be enough. Why? It is because everything belongs to God, everything is for His glory, and everything is from His grace. So we should not think something belongs to us, nor should we say, “God, I offered this much, so bless me!”

But why does God tell the Israelites to tithe and then test Him? Verse 10 says, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” The Bible shows that God tests humans a lot, but there is

never a time when a human tests God, except for two places. In Isaiah 7:11-12, during the days of Ahaz, the Arameans allied with northern Israel to attack southern Judah. That was because in those days, Judah had a pro-Assyrian policy while the rest of Palestine was anti-Assyrian. So Aram and Israel were invading Judah from the north. This is a very tense situation. Aram has just taken away an important port city from Judah and Israel has killed 12,000 soldiers of Judah and taken captive 20,000 more. The city of Jerusalem is about to fall. But at that moment, God spoke through Isaiah, "Ahaz, do not worry. I will destroy your enemies. Since you do not believe Me, test Me and ask for a sign." But Ahaz said, "God, what are You talking about? Why should I test You?" He did not say this out of fear and respect of God. But anyways, here God told Ahaz to test Him, and he refused.

The second time is Judges 6:33-40. Here God has just told Gideon, "I will make you a judge and I will destroy the Midianites." At that time, Gideon tests God: one time, the wool fleece is wet with dew, the other time the fleece is dry but the ground around it is wet. But Gideon did not do this to test God. Rather, because he was so weak, he was asking God for the confirmation of faith.

So these are the two other places in the Bible that test God. But the Korean church has the tendency to misuse these verses. Especially the revival conferences tell people, "God said to test Him. So offer your tithes and offerings!" They misuse these verses too much. They are mistaken about these verses. Malachi's generation was very skeptical. They doubted, did not care about God, and had unbelief. This generation was so corrupt that the whole nation was cursed. So there was no more hope for them. God then was using a test in order to save them, saying, "Even if you have to test Me, return and love Me." Therefore, "Test God" is not a word for just anybody or for just any generation. If you do not have the right heart, or if you test God even though He didn't even tell you to, then you could die.

Look at Malachi 3:15. "But you have said, 'But now we call the arrogant. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.'" This actually means that the arrogant will be under a curse, the evildoers will be destroyed, and those who challenge God will face wrath. Logically, it doesn't make sense that God says to test Him in verse 10, but then to never test Him in verse 15. So what does this mean? It means that verse 10 does not apply to just anyone or to just whoever. This was a corrupt generation and Israel was about to completely die. God was saying, "Test Me, and love Me," to these Israelites. He was not saying it to us for whenever we have a problem. If you test God, you will die.

Deuteronomy 6:16 says, "Do not test the LORD your God," and Jesus used these words to win against the devil's temptation. So there is no way that we can ever test God. Psalms 95:8-11 says, "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Mas-sah in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did." This is clearly talking about the time the Israelites tested God with the rock at Meribah. So the word "Test God" does not apply to just any person or any generation. This is how corrupt the Israelites in Malachi's day were. This was the very last resort that God used to save them.

God should not receive only the money and time you have left over from your spending. God is kabowd. His word is heavy and precious, and it is an honor to live as His children. I mentioned this when I preached on Philippians, but at that time being a Roman citizen was a prideful thing, so the Romans even paid taxes and fulfilled their duties faithfully. Paul said, "But if you have the heavenly citizenship, how can you live filthy lives?" So if we, as people who are entrusted with God's glory, give God conditions and think, "Should I offer tithes or not?", then our Christian walk is over. There is no more reason to live the Christian lifestyle. It would better for you to go to a pagan temple and ring the gong instead. That is not the lifestyle of the people who live with God. The reason God said, "Test Me," to the Israelites is that He was saying, "Israelites, you are finished!" He was urging them to repent. So He does not say, "Test Me," to just anyone.

I will say it again. The issue of tithing is not "Should I tithe or not?" If you are wrestling with this in your mind, then you need to reexamine your Christian life. If you have this kind of mental conflict, then you need to decide whether it is better to believe in God or to believe in a Buddhist priest. That is not how you are supposed to live with the God of glory and the God of amazing love. Living with God means that if you had 1,000 lives, you would not think it a waste to give up all 1,000 lives for God to serve Him. That is how precious God is. God has loved us so much, so it should be impossible for you to take at most one-tenth and think, "Should I offer it or not?" So please do not make me tell you to offer tithes and to pray. It is shameful for me to say these things. Tithing is the very basic thing. Do you have a problem offering one-tenth, two-tenths, or three-tenths? Why not offer it all to God? It is the same thing with prayer. Do you have a problem praying 30 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours, or 3 hours? Why not pray for the whole week or for 10 days? Stop concerning yourself with your actions.

If you live with God, you should not stumble because of the problem of what to do. It is so incredible to live with the Creator God. There is no limit to speaking about His glory and His worth. For the Israelites to shamefully use God for their own profit and to ask whether or not they should even serve God... Because of their corruption, it was over for them. It was because of His love for them and because He wanted to save them that He told them to test Him concerning tithes. But we must know that it is not His will for us to test Him. Anyways, God was saying that He would bless the Israelites through their tithes. I have told pastors before at the pastors' conference that they should not force their lay members to tithe. But, look, I am not talking about money. I tell you to give offerings because your hearts are hardened. This is not a matter of money. I do not want you to offer what you have left over, but instead I want you to offer your everything. I want you to offer your lives. Lydia begged Paul to use her house as a church building. There is no need for force.

Ever since I have started my pastoral ministry, I have so clearly heard God tell me that He has great plans for Yulbang Church. That is because the power to rule over kings is in the church. However, we must match up with God's plans. But we cannot do so if we are cheapskates. "O Lord, offering tithes to You should not be my concern. I will give everything

to You. I will not even hold back my life from You. I will no longer make “to do or not to do” a problem in my life, even concerning how many hours I pray.” You should be able to say these things. You should do everything according to God’s standards. Those of you who feel tithing is a burden should repent. It should not be a burden anymore. Tithing is not about whether or not you do it.

God spoke to the Israelites this way because they were so corrupt. Yet He was still willing to bless them. So, for those of you who do not think of tithing as “Should I do it or not?”, then these blessings will be multiplied 10 times for you. Or even 100 times, or even 1,000 times. So God said, “Test Me, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven.” I want you to believe that the floodgates of heaven have been opened in this worship service. The things of heaven will fall down like a waterfall from the Father who gives all sorts of good gifts. The opening of the floodgates of heaven refers to the refreshing seasonal rain that fell upon the crops during the agricultural times. After the seasonal rain comes an abundant harvest. So after the floodgates of heaven open, there are five types of blessings available. I bless you that these blessings will be yours as well.

The first blessing, “I will pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” Like I said before, the Israelites tithes were so abundant that it took Hezekiah 4 months to count it all. And in Deuteronomy 28, God promises amazing blessings: the Israelites will be the head and not the tail; they will be the greatest among the nations; they will be blessed when they go out and blessed when they come in; and their enemies will come at them from one direction but flee in seven directions. There was no blessing that God did not promise. He was going to pour out all sorts of blessings, both spiritual and physical blessings. These promises of Deuteronomy 28 must be restored. God is a God of blessings. I’m not just talking about money. There is no way we can live if we do not receive God’s blessings.

You must receive God’s blessings. These blessings must overflow in your life to the point where you say, “God, that’s enough! I can no longer count how much You have blessed me!” Who will He bless? God will bless the person who does not make calculations before Him, the person who does not call God into question, the person who does not use God for his own profit, the person who says, “God, everything belongs to You!”

The second blessing, “I will prevent pests from devouring your crops.” This means that money will not be used wastefully and that there will be no wasteful losses. It is the same with spirituality. You should offer pure tithes, and your soul should have pure righteousness, faith, and holiness. This is the difference between Cain’s offering and Abel’s offering. The people who offer all their lives and finances to God will not suffer pests on their crops. That is, they will not suffer wasteful loss.

The third blessing, “the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit.” That means that the fruit will not fall before the proper time. And that means that God will give you the absolute best. He will give it to you when it is at its ripest, when it has the richest taste. No fruit will fall

before the proper time. God will carry out everything at the perfect time that He desires. As Ephesians 1 talks about the 8 spiritual blessings, God puts everything into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment, to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head. This means that God will bless you with the time, people, place, and things that He desires. He will even bless you by making your children ripe and perfect.

The fourth blessing, "for yours will be a delightful land." This means that your business, children, family, ministry, and everything that you influence will become beautiful and delightful. I especially bless the children in our church to receive these blessings. Children must receive God's blessings. Everything – family and business – will become delightful.

The fifth blessing: how delightful and beautiful will everything become? They will be so delightful that "all the nations will call you blessed." Even the pagans will say, "Wow, because you believed in your God well, He gave you such a great blessing." This is how beautiful and delightful everything will become. The nations will call you blessed. This kind of blessing comes when you offer pure tithes. This means that this blessing comes not just through your financial offering but also through your faith. You must become the person who does not calculate with God, the person who does not serve God to gain profit. You must become the person who serves God out of love, the person who serves Him wholeheartedly because of His goodness and His amazing love. I truly bless you so that you will become this type of person.

So now you know what tithing means, right? This is not about how you offered one, two, three, or four things. God wants to hear you say, "God, You are my everything." This is why God told the Israelites, "Return! Return!" The spirit of pure tithing is returning to God. We must know this well. The reason God said, "Test Me," to the Israelites is because they were going to die. Today I have explained the issue of tithing, right? Let me ask the people who think that tithing belongs to the Old Testament times and only offer tithes every now and then: Does tithing belong to the Old Testament times? No. Tithing is not about whether or not you do it. This is a wrong thing that the churches are teaching. Right now, 100% of our church members are offering their tithes. As we move forward, I hope that many people will offer not just one-tenth but even nine-tenths because they want to offer everything to God. I'm not saying this so you will be greedy, but you must become the blessed people who truly offer everything to God.

3 : 13 - 4 : 6

13. "You have said harsh things against me," says the LORD. "Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?'

14. "You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?'

15. But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.' "

16. Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.

17. "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him.

18. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

1. "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them.

2. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

3. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty.

4. "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

5. "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

6. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

Malachi (7) 3:13-4:6

“What have we said against You?”

You may not know it now, but once you reach God's Kingdom you will certainly know how important it is to have attended a good church. It is so important to be the church that directly proclaims the truth and risks its life for the word of God. We are about to finish up the book of Malachi. No matter how you look at it, Malachi was the servant of God who prepared the way for the Gospel, and even though he was a prophet, he had the characteristics of a pastor. There are 6 disputes that we have discussed. Although they are disputes, which made up the teaching style used by rabbis, these are also sermons. And this last sermon amazingly summarizes and wraps up the entire Old Testament.

The title of this message is: “What Have We Said Against You?” Look in verse 13: “You have said harsh things against me. Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’” When the Lord says you have said harsh things against Him, you should immediately bow down and repent. But instead, these Israelites asked, “When did we ever do such things?”

The issue concerning these words actually appears in 2:17, “How have we wearied him?” In the fourth dispute, I said that God received stress. Why did He get stressed? Because the Israelites spoke recklessly. What did they say recklessly? “All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD” and “Where is the God of justice?” So they gave stress to God. The people who especially gave stress to God were the Levites. The Lord's servants spoke rashly. So God put those servants under His judgment. Now that judgment was not killing them, but rather He was going to send His messenger, one who would make the people holy and prepare the arrival of the Lord. Jesus took the words of Isaiah and the other prophets and said this messenger was John the Baptist. Anyways, God says in 3:1, “Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple.”

Yahweh will suddenly come to His temple! Yahweh will come as the messenger of the covenant. He will establish a new covenant. Look at Jeremiah 31:3-5, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful. Again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; the farmers will plant them and enjoy their fruit.” And the words that factually establish this covenant are in Jeremiah 31:33, when God says, “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.” This is talking about the indwelling Holy Spirit and the actualization of the new covenant. And this is also what Malachi 3:1 is prophesying. And God's wrath and judgment toward the Levites who spoke rashly against Him is to purify them like refining silver, and finally God will receive the offering that is worthy to Him.

Up to this point, God has given the Israelites plenty of forgiveness and opportunities

to repent, and with this in mind, He said that He would refine them. But now, starting from verse 13, the Israelites have become completely hardened and are dead. They can no longer to repent, so now God has no choice but to completely shatter them and make them new. Therefore, in the midst of God's judgment, verse 16 begins to talk about the end times. God has no choice but to judge them. "Harsh" in verse 13 can also mean "stubborn" and "hardened", which means that they are no longer able to repent.

What is horrifying reality is that today's churches and lay members have reached the stage where they can no longer repent. Even though He is Creator God, the thing God fears the most is when our hearts become hardened. That is because when our hearts are hardened, repentance is impossible. At that point, the only thing God can do is bring judgment.

The Israelites continued to grumble and complain. The reason God views these words as important is not because of the words themselves: it is because words reflect a person's spiritual status. Just as John 3:34 says, "For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit." The person who is seized by the Spirit of God will speak the words of God. But, because we are seized by this world, we say worldly things, and because we are seized by sexual immorality, we say sexually immoral things. A person's words show which evil spirits have seized that person. Words are not just words. The reason words are important is that they show a person's nature, and that is why the Lord said that a man's nature is evil. So God was angry. We may think that we say things accidentally, but actually our words show how chaotic and corrupt our souls are.

The reason you groan and complain is because you have unbelief against God and wickedness against God. When the Israelites rebelled against Moses, they were rebelling against God. Whispering rumors and complaining in the church is dangerous too. Even Galatians warns against spreading rumors and slandering. When the spirit of slander runs around in the church, the church becomes very weak. No matter what, if you hear rumors or slandering against anybody, you should realize that an evil spirit has already entered the church and you should cast it out.

If you whisper against the pastor, then you are rebelling against God. If you whisper such rumors, then it means death for you, for me, and for everyone. If you have something to say to me, then tell me in person. If you are judging someone, then you shouldn't say it behind their back but tell them in person. Whispering behind someone's back is cowardly. So we must not slander against each other.

From this perspective, grumbling and complaining means that you are opposing God Himself and rebelling against Him. It means you are saying, "God, I hate Your control! Leave me alone so I can live however I want!" Actually saying these words is not the problem, but it is the evil root of unbelief has made that person say these things. The evil root is why God becomes angry.

So how did the Israelites oppose God? Firstly, in verse 14, they said, "It is futile to serve

God."They said such an absurd thing like "It is futile to serve God!" "Futile" in Hebrew is shawe, which means "worthless". So they did not want to serve God because it was worthless to them. They would serve God if it meant that they would become rich and everything goes well for them and their children are successful. But they were not successful, so they thought that it was useless to serve God, it was a waste of time, and it was unnecessary. "Gain vs. loss" became the standard for serving God.

There are a lot of words repeated in Malachi. Why is it such a great sin to serve God from gain and loss? If you have truly met God and truly know Him, it is impossible for you to have such an absurd Christian lifestyle. Using the standard of gain and loss means you are serving God out of your self-confirmation. The characteristic of self-confirmation and the absurd faith is that whenever it is not profitable for you, you boldly throw God away. If you say, "I've believed in God faithfully until now, but I don't want to believe in Him anymore," what that actually means is that you didn't believe in God in the past either. If gain and loss is the standard for your faith, then you are actually serving Baal whom you have disguised as God. This is very important!

If you truly know the Creator God, then you will not serve God because it is profitable or because you like it or even because you experience personal growth. So when Hosea 4:6 says, "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests," it means that because you live your Christian life without truly knowing God, you treat God like some sort of idol, and serving Him becomes idol worship. As the Creator God, He has power and authority and wonderful glory, but we betray Him and exchange His glory for unworthy things. God is grieved! Why would He not be grieved? After all, His people worship Him as if they were worshipping Baal. Because of their corrupt lives, God brings His wrath. So the people who serve God under this illusion will easily throw Him away to grab a rare opportunity. They say, "There's not much worth to serving God. I'm still poor, and I'm still in pain..." But those who truly know God and truly have faith in Him will not do such things.

Habakkuk declared that even if he had absolutely nothing, serving God and rejoicing in God and living by God was his everything. We must not hesitate to serve God even if everything we have is lost or taken away. Even though they lost all their property, Priscilla and Aquila moved to Corinth. There they met Paul and worked together with him to support themselves, but they did not cease worshipping God. Their focus was on God Himself, and they believed that God is love and God is good. The standard of their Christian faith was not based on what God gave them.

"It is useless to serve God! It is not profitable!" The reason you say such things is because you live by self-confirmation and according to your own gospel. Why is it so important to eat the word of truth? God's word is grounded in truth, so if you truly know God, if you know the truth, then at the same time you will willingly give up everything you have. You are supposed to live your Christian life by giving up what you have and being seized by God. If you are trying to seize God with your own strength, then you are living a delusional Christian

life. Even if you have attended church for 10 or 20 years, if you have not given up on yourself, then you haven't even taken the first step of your Christian walk. When God's word draws near to you and when you truly meet him, then you will instantly give up yourself. If you are still trying to serve God according to the boundaries of your life and the standard of your own methods, then you haven't even taken the first step. It doesn't matter whatever spiritual gift you use because spiritual gifts are not the 100% confirmation of salvation. There are many people who have gone to hell even though they could use spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts and power don't matter. Through the descending Holy Spirit, anyone can manifest spiritual gifts.

Just as 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith," we must always examine whether or not our faith is established in objective truth. What evidence can we look for? It is not basing your faith on profit. We must become like Job who lost every reason to like God but still said, "I will serve God." That confession must rise up from deep within us and overflow. "God! Even if I have nothing, even if everything is taken away, but if You are with me, that's all I need!" Whether or not you have something cannot be the standard of your faith. You might have it, you might not; you might go, you might not; you might die, you might live. Does all that actually matter? No! If God is with you, that is everything. We must walk forward, step by step, in our faith by believing in the right truth and accepting it and risking our lives for it.

1 Thessalonians 1:3-4 talks about the work of faith, the labor of love, and the endurance of hope. These are the evidence of being chosen by God. We are supposed to be able to see these three things in our lives and confirm that we have been chosen by God. And if you are happy and excited and joyful without the Lord, then something is wrong. If you are without the Lord, then you are supposed to lose all taste for life. If you can't feel God, then you are supposed to feel uneasy. But on the other hand, even if it looks like there is no hope, but you feel God's presence, then you are able to be happy. So, "It is futile to serve God" is the first harsh word.

Secondly, "What did we gain by carrying out his requirements?" Because Malachi was immensely influenced by Deuteronomy, the "requirements" here are talking about the deuteronomic commandments. In the context of Deuteronomy, commandment means covenant. But the Israelites have broken their covenant with God. They asked, "What use is it having a covenant with God and living as his people?" Is Jesus Christ really worthless to you? Colossians 1 says that Jesus is the Creator God and our Savior, so He has so much worth to us. Anyways, the Israelites were breaking their covenant. There are people who say, "I don't care if I go to hell." If they really knew what it means to go to hell, would they be able to say that? Are they really fine with going to the place that has no hope forever?

The Lord says in John 12:49, "I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it." Even Jesus Himself, who is Creator God, did not speak on his own but God had to tell Him what to say! That is what "commandment" is. And then in verse 50, Jesus says, "I know that his command leads to eternal life."

God's command is eternal life. So breaking His commandments is breaking eternal life. Isn't this scary? What is it that makes you think that you can live even after breaking His commands? The reason you think that way is because you don't confirm that Jesus is King in your everyday life, and you just enter and leave the church.

Just as 1 John 2:22 says, "Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist," the reality is that so many antichrists are being produced in the church. It is not that Yulbang Church is an especially great church, but rather our church is the normal church. Risking our lives for God's word doesn't make us a special church, but rather anyone, if he is truly God's child, can live this way. Jesus is the one who said, "God's command is eternal life." Jesus is Creator God and He did not speak of his own accord. But the people of Malachi's generation were saying, "God's commands are useless. What's the use in living according to His commandments?" It's the same as saying, "What's the use in living according to God's word? If I live according to His word, then it'll only be an inconvenience for me. I can't even have fun on the Lord's Day, and sometimes if I do this, it's so inconvenient." This is breaking eternal life. We must confirm that Jesus Christ is King in our lives every day. Sometimes we think, "Money is my king, the world is my king, people are my king." Because we change our king in every moment, our souls forget that risking everything for God's commands is the true life. We start to think, "Eh, it's ok if I don't always follow His command. I still attend church and give offerings, so what's wrong?" There are so many antichrists in the church. To the person who lives the correct and normal Christian life, God's command is eternal life. His word is life. And that person has nothing outside of the words of his King. But whoever denies that Jesus is the King is the antichrist. So there are so many people who are the antichrists in the church. That is why Apostle John said that there are many antichrists.

We must say in every moment, "Jesus! Only You are my King! Jesus! Only You are my everything! Jesus! You are all I need!" If you confess this every day, you will not accept even a billion dollars if it is not the word of God. We must know that in every circumstance, the King's command, which is His word, is life. Breaking His command means destroying life. But actually, no one has the authority to break God's covenant. The only reason you think you can break His covenant is because you are so corrupt. Who is the only one who can break the covenant? Even God will not break His covenant. So if you think you can break His covenant, it means you are making yourself higher than the Creator God. This is truly scary. Saying "What use is there in keeping the covenant?" is completely absurd.

Thirdly, "What did we gain by going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?" The root of the word "mourning" here is an Arabic word. It actually means "to honor". So the Israelites were saying, "What's the use in honoring God? What's the use in respecting Him?" We can see that they were really corrupt. Actually, you might feel that my message is empty. You might be thinking, "Ah, there's no way I would ever say that." But you must be humble and realize that you can also turn out this way like the Israelites.

The main message of Malachi is repentance. In the end, Satan can do whatever he wants to the souls who do not repent. It is possible for you to become corrupt like this; it is possible for you to become a hypocrite like the Pharisees; and even if you don't, it is possible for you to suddenly leave the church and suddenly come to a disco club. It can happen to you too. If you don't repent and your soul is dying, and you want to play billiards, then one day you'll find yourself in a billiards room. Satan has power over the soul that has abandoned God, so he can make that person do anything. In what way a person will be corrupt is up to Satan. If you're hardened and think, "I'll never be that way," then you are in danger. All evil roots begin from this one thought.

"What's the use in honoring God?" Honor! Kabowd! Among the 6 meanings of kabowd, the third meaning is "honor". It means honoring God. Even worldly people risk their lives for their own honor. A long time ago, the Korean nobles risked their lives for their honor, even beyond what we can imagine. Even if they were starving but only had a glass of water, they pretended that they had just eaten a great feast. And even if they were about to drown, they would never swim like a dog to save their own life. This is what risking your life for your reputation looks like. That was the nobles' identity. So for Christians.... is it a small deal if Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of porridge? Some might say, "Well, he was really hungry. So what?" No way! Esau sold his God-given identity, so it was over for him! God then chose Jacob, even though he was shrewd.

Honoring God! The life that never disgraces God's honor! This is your identity! How important is your identity? These days Christians should have the temperament like that of the old-time nobles: "Don't touch me. Even if I have to die, I won't hold hands. Even if I die, I won't bow my head." This is what happened with Gideon's army. Among 10,000 soldiers, God told Gideon to send away everyone who got on their knees and drank the water like a dog. Only those who drank the water with their hands, even if they could hardly catch any water with their hands, were chosen. God chose the 300 soldiers who did not compromise with the world. The people who do not bow down before the world. The people who do not surrender to the world. God works through the people who honor Him.

But, you do not honor God; instead you take Him lightly. Why? Because God is not your everything. Because God is only an accessory to you. Because money and people are everything to you. I am so thankful for being a pastor. I don't care what people say to me. I only have to please God; you don't know how happy I am.

Look at politicians. They change their positions based on what other people's opinions. Why is that? They don't honor God, but they honor people, the world, and money, so they waver back and forth. You have no idea how freeing and how peaceful it is to trust God. Because I don't trust in people or in the world, so even if thousands surround me, I have no fear. I am so thankful for this. We are supposed to honor God, but we disgrace God's honor in front of the pagans, if we do not honor God and treat Him like an accessory. We must maintain God's honor. We must even be able to die for His honor.

Polycarp was told, "Even you have to lie, if you say 'I don't believe in Jesus' just once, we will let you live." But Polycarp replied, "Don't make me laugh. The Lord who has never denied me during the 80 years of my life is in front of me. So, even as a lie, how can I ever deny Him? If you are going to kill me, then kill me." So he was burned to death. This is honor. He willingly died for God's honor. Therefore, we must not easily compromise with the world, easily sin, easily hold hands with the world, and live a life without God's honor. God's honor must become everything to you. We must risk our lives for His honor. For the sake of God's glory, we must give up on even lying just once.

God's people are different. Daniel could have lied just once. He could have hidden in a basement and prayed, but instead he opened his window and prayed in a loud voice, saying, "O God, bless Israel!" And so he was thrown into the lions' pit. This is honor. The person who knows God's honor will live this way. But the Israelites said, "What's the point in trying to honor God?" They said such a ridiculous thing.

The fourth thing is in verse 15. There are 3 strange blessings. Firstly, "Blessed are the arrogant." The Israelites called arrogance a blessing. While no church member actually talks like the Israelites did, in reality, this kind of wicked arrogance is flourishing. Especially pastors who carry their noses high and say, "I'm a pastor, and I have this many church members." Once a pastor reaches 100 members, he holds his pose differently. If you look at a pastor's pose, you can know how many church members are in his church. For examples, for pastors who reach 1000 members, they think they are higher than God. Those pastors don't even talk that much. It's harder to meet them than to meet God; you have to pass through three or four checkpoints in their secretarial office first. They are so arrogant. Even if they don't say it themselves, their lives testify that "the arrogant are blessed."

In Hebrew, "arrogance" is zed. Zed can also mean "rebellious". Arrogance makes a person's heart over-energized. So the characteristic of arrogance is denying your own hurt and hurting someone else. Arrogance is cancerous. A cancerous tumor slowly kills a person, but when that person dies, the cancer dies along with the patient. Thus, arrogance advances destruction. It is the standard for the division between heaven and hell.

The tax collector couldn't even look toward heaven but confessed, "God! I am a sinner." But the Pharisee said, "I haven't sinned like that man over there, I offer tithes, and I fast twice a week." That means he fasted 104 days in one year. The people who strive to fast all the time, their own wills are sky-high. However, it is the tax collector, not the Pharisee, who was declared righteous.

Arrogance and humility are the difference between hell and heaven. The arrogant person is the complete opposite of the godly person. A godly person should not accompany an arrogant person because he will be influenced by the arrogant person. Psalm 86:14; Psalm 119:21, 51, 69, 85, 122; and Proverbs; there are so many words that the Bible has to say about the arrogant.

How can you know whether or not you are arrogant? If you think that you are more excellent than another person, then it means an evil spirit has entered you. Arrogance is Satan's brilliant tactics to not make you stupid so he can use you. If you think you are better than another person at doing something, then an evil spirit has entered you. No matter what, if having something makes you arrogant, then that something is useless. If you think, "My spirituality is better than that person's!" then a demon has already entered you. In our church, we are supposed to keep God's truth and have confidence towards God because of His truth. But if you become arrogant just because you have the truth, then the truth will no longer be the truth. That also means a demon has entered you. If the truth has entered you, then you will lower your neck in humility.

Truth is not about how much you know. Last time I told you to learn Hebrew and Greek, but if you become arrogant because you know so much Hebrew and Greek, then those are useless. It's the same with money. The reason God does not pour out finances to business people is because He knows they will become arrogant because of money. So He doesn't give it to them. That is what arrogance does. In every matter, considering yourself lower than your neighbor is the foundation of our spirituality. This was Jesus' heart as it clearly says in Philippians 2:5. If you do not consider yourself lower than others, if arrogance enters your heart, it means an evil spirit has entered you. You may ask, "Pastor, aren't you speaking too harshly?" No, I'm not. Arrogance is the demons' top-grade strategy. If demons enter a person and that person becomes slow and stupid, upon entering they don't think that person is useful. But if demons enter a person and that person is quick on their feet and full of their own strength, then that person is very useful to the demons.

There are times when, after I preach the word well and God's grace falls abundantly, without even knowing it I hold my shoulders high and think, "Isn't this the standard for preaching?" That means a demon has already entered me. And so then I repent. No matter what it is, if something makes you arrogant, it is useless.

Arrogance and humility are directly connected to salvation. Those who are bowed are the pure grain, while those who are stiff are chaff. God will gather the pure grain into the storehouses, but He will gather the chaff to throw them into the fire. What are the characteristics of true spirituality and hearing the truth? It is continually bowing your neck. We must continually become humble and give ourselves up. If you slander and judge others, then you are doing your spirituality wrong.

The second strange blessing is "Blessed are the evildoers, for they will prosper." The Bible clearly says that God hates evil. But the Israelites said that those who do evil are blessed. They were so hardened that they changed what God hates into something God loves. They were promoting and praising evil. Korean people say, "It doesn't matter how you get there, but you just need to get there." These kinds of sayings are praising wickedness. The process doesn't matter as long as the conclusion is good. The ends justify the means. You don't care about the method; you only care about the money. Is the conclusion or the process more

important to us? For believers, the process is certainly more important. It is God who is holding onto the conclusion. We are supposed to just walk with God step by step. Even if the conclusion is poverty and not good, but if you follow God's process, then you will become like God. As long as we live according to the form of being that God wants, then we will be successful beings.

What is done is not important. If you don't care about the method and you try to scrape together some rabble, then it's meaningless. You think that if you gather a lot of people, your pastoral ministry will be successful. God is burning with anger because of you, even if He doesn't say so. This is wrong picture: the pastors who minister under their own delusion and self-confirmation, and the lay members who think, "This is how you're supposed to live the Christian life" and mistake self-confirmation as confirmation of salvation. As the Bible says, everything is destroyed in the furnace. We don't want to be the shameful person who builds but what he built is burned away as 1 Corinthians 3:15 says. "Blessed are the evildoers, for they will prosper." The Israelites were praising the things God hates. If you envy the evildoers who become rich, and you envy the world, then you are praising evil in your heart. You must consider the world as trash. Everything that has nothing to do with God is trash. It is dangerous if you receive the evil influence of praising wickedness.

The third strange blessing is: "Blessed are those who challenge God, for they will escape disaster." Deuteronomy 6:16 clearly says, "Do not put the LORD your God to the test." Yet these Israelites were saying that those who challenge God are blessed. They had absolutely no fear concerning judgment. All of this thinking begins with the lack of deep repentance. It is very dangerous if you do not repent.

Blood circulates the human body in 15 seconds, and all the cells in the body change every 15 days. Just as our physical bodies change, we must repent in a new way every day and draw near to God. If you stop or do not change, it's the same as being dead. According to medical knowledge, being alive means continually pumping blood. We must continually repent and continually pluck out evil. That is the evidence that you are alive. If you stop, it means you are dead. Once you stop repenting and God does not reign over you, then it is up to Satan whether you will become a hypocrite like the Pharisees or enter the disco club or play billiards or commit robbery. It's Satan's choice, not yours. When we consider that we have become hardened at the point when we stopped repenting, the conclusion is not important. Rather what made us hardened is important.

Our focus is on "When did this kind of conclusion start?" This is why repenting every day is so important. This kind of conclusion happens to the souls who do not repent until that conclusion happens. We don't need to wait to see the conclusion of Satan's brilliant strategy. Why? Because we repent every day. We must live our lives with the desire to see God's new glory every day.

Verses 14-15 talk about how sin is the conclusion for the people who do decide not

to deeply repent. In the last days, these are the things that will happen to believers, not to pagans. It is believers who will become this hardened in heart.

The second main point looks at "What will God do?" From 3:16 to 4:3, we see that God abandons the people who speak these evil things against Him, but He blesses the people who honor Him. From this point, God says "in that day" in almost every verse: "in the day when", "the day is coming that will burn like a furnace", "that day that is coming", "that great and dreadful day" and so on. This is talking about the end times.

The final conclusion of Malachi is about the end times. Every time it says "in that day", it is in the singular form. But in Isaiah and Jeremiah, "that day" is in the plural. From the prophetic perspective, Malachi's focus is not on Christ's first coming, but rather his prophecy focuses on the judgment that begins with the first coming and is connected all the way through to His second coming. Malachi prophesied about John the Baptist as Elijah and that Elijah would prepare the way of the Lord. But this is not talking about the first coming, all of this is talking about the process of judgment from the first coming until the second coming.

Malachi's mission was to pass along everything to the books of the Gospel, but his focus was not on the first coming but rather on the entire process of the end times. When is "the end times"? The end times began with the first coming and will end with the second coming. So even now we are in the end times. The Lord's coming is talking about God's judgment from the first coming until the second coming. The Israelites were in the state where it was impossible for them to repent, so God had to make them new. However, God's desire is not judgment. That is the conclusion.

God abandons the wicked and rewards those who revere Him. Firstly, in verse 16, "Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other." The wicked people were talking too. They said, "There's no use in serving God. There is no profit in keeping His commandments. What's the use in honoring God?" And they also spoke of 3 blessings, including "Blessed are those who test God, for they will escape disaster." They chattered like this. Not only did the wicked chatter, but also the righteous spoke with one another. And so the Lord listened and clearly heard them. But He also clearly hears what the wicked say. In 2:17, God clearly heard them. He hears the wicked and uses them as the standard for judgment. He hears the righteous, writes a scroll of remembrance, and uses them as the standard for reward. Therefore, the reason we speak rashly is because we do not feel God. You have no idea how excited God becomes whenever I preach. He tells me, "Wow, your message is so good! Do it again!" God likes to ask for an encore, so I prepare my sermons so that He will ask for an encore.

When you speak words that revere God, He listens and says, "Say it again!" The Word became flesh, and that means that He has granted such a deep intimacy. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God made us into His tabernacle, and He presented to us what the essential nature of our being is. Therefore, how intimate is God? God is closer to you than

your own breath. You have no idea how great His precious grace is when He says that the Word became flesh. So when you minister to a soul, you should feel like you are ministering to a divine being. That is what “the Word became flesh” means. We humans are nothing. However, the Word became flesh for your sake, and He dwells in you. That is why you should treat a soul like a divine being.

There are many times when a soul looks hopeless to others. But they are not hopeless, and when I minister to them, I treat them like divine beings. We must treat others as precious, and that is when hope will rise. Other people may not think that person has changed, but in my eyes, that person changes. God is closer than your own breath. He thought of you as precious, and so the Word became flesh and made you His tabernacle. He is Creator God. So, if you are living with such a God, how can you rashly speak words of despair, filthy words, unclean words, pointless words, or useless words? Words are not just words. You must cast these things out, such as abusive words, pointless words, useless words, and harsh words.

It is clear that God listens to what you say. The Lord listens to those who revere Him so that He can reward them. “A scroll of remembrance was written in His presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored His name.” This “scroll of remembrance” is unique to the book of Malachi. Another phrase that also belongs only to the book of Malachi is “messenger of the covenant”.

So why does only Malachi talk about these things? There are two possible reasons. One is that somewhere in this world, there was some material that recorded such things but now has been destroyed. The other is that Malachi was unable to express his deep revelation except in this way only. That is why he said “scroll” (or “book”).

In Exodus 32:33, the Lord tells Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.” God erases life from His book. So we must not sin in His presence.

The word “book” also appears in Daniel 12:1. “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered.”

And again, in Psalm 69:28, “May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.” In this way, God excludes the wicked by erasing their names from the book of life. That also means that everyone who is born into this world has their names in the book of life. But if a person denies God, then God erases that person’s name from the book. But the names of the righteous are in this book so that God will reward them.

If we look in the book of Esther, the Persian king Xerxes, Esther’s husband, wasn’t able to sleep one night. So he ordered a eunuch, saying, “You! Read the book of chronicles to me.” And he heard about how there was a conspiracy and that a certain person stopped the rebellion. And that person’s name was Mordecai. So the king asked if any reward had been

given to Mordecai for saving him. But the reply was that no reward was given. At that time, 'the Great King of Mistakes' Haman appeared. And the king asks Haman, "Look, Haman. A certain person has done such a great deed for me, so what should I do for him?" So the Great King of Mistakes Haman thinks that the king is talking about him, and he replies, "O king, let that man wear one of the king's royal robes and ride one of the king's horses, and let a person you value stand in front of people and proclaim, 'This man has been rewarded by the king!'" Then the king says, "What you say is good. So go do that for Mordecai." If you are mistaken like Haman, then your life will become miserable. Just as King Xerxes rewarded Mordecai, God makes records in His book of remembrance so that He can reward us. Every time you do not live for your own profit but instead you give up yourself for God, then God records it in His book of remembrance in order to reward you. "Even when you give a cup of cold water to the little ones in My name, you will certainly not lose your reward." How great is this promise!

So can you speak so rashly? No! God gives a reward for even one word. In the Bible, the reward God gives is great influence and authority. In truth, we will receive a reward when we die and go to heaven. Even Paul said in 1 Timothy 4:6-8, "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race and I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." The crown of righteousness has been prepared. It is not the crown of life. This is the reward we will receive when we finish our mission.

But the reward is not only for when we reach God's Kingdom. In the Bible, God's reward is authority and influence. For example, an unknown poet who lives on an island suddenly won the Nobel Prize. As soon as he receives the Nobel Prize, people from all over the world travel to his island to learn his way of thinking. That is authority and influence. It is the same for us. If you continually do what pleases God and say what pleases God, and if you do not seek your own profit, and if you give up everything for God's glory, and if you continually live for God, you will be recorded in the book of remembrance. Then your reward will immediately come down from above, and it will manifest itself as authority and influence.

Even though our church is small, we are moving the whole world. People from all over the world come to us to learn something. This is influence. The influence from God, His reward, has nothing to do with numbers. His reward means using money for others, bestowing favor upon others, and training others. We will continue to do these things. We freely give everything away. This is how our reward, God-given influence will grow.

If everyone in one church risks their lives for God's word, then before one generation passes away, that church will become like a tribal nation in its influence. We will send out our children to the nations, and they will influence and shake the world. Even now, when our church goes to Singapore, the demons there tremble in fear and do not want us to come. Why is that? It is because our influence has grown. So do not think that you will receive the

reward only after you die.

“The kingdom of God is near” means the kingdom of God has come upon earth. Of course, it’s not to create a utopian world, but the kingdom of God is about His reign. With regard to rewards, receiving a box of diamonds is not a big deal in heaven. Please do not think of rewards like that. I am talking about our influence. It’s about authority and influence! These are written in the book of remembrance and are given to us. God wrote us down in the book of remembrance, and so our influence should keep expanding.

Secondly, in verse 17, what God will give to those who revere Him? “They will be mine,” says the LORD Almighty, “in the day when I make up my treasured possession.” That day is talking about both the first and second coming at the same time. At His first coming, the Lord came and did this great work. It was through His coming that we have become His special treasure. “Treasured possession” means you are His treasure. The work that the Lord did was to make the ones who are being made holy into the same family as the One who makes them holy so that He will not be ashamed to call us his brothers. In this way, He has made you into His special treasure.

In Hebrew, the word for “treasured possession” is segullah. It is a word that is used in the covenantal context. Exodus 19:5-6, Deuteronomy 7:6, Deut. 26:18, and Psalm 134 all talk about possession. Especially Titus 2:14 says, “(Jesus Christ) gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own.” His people are His possession. So His has made His people into His special treasure. 1 Peter 2:9 says that you are “a people belonging to God.” This is saying the same thing. The Lord came and did a great work, and that work was that we became His special treasure.

Segullah is the word used for the attendants around the king. There is no secret between the king and his attendants; they are friends. The amazing work that Jesus Christ did on this earth was to make it so that there would be no secrets between God and us. If there is a secret, it means that you are the one keeping a secret, not God. He has no secrets.

There are several cases where the word “love” appears. One case is in John 5:20, “For the Father loves the Son.” That “love” is not agape, but phileo, which is the love between friends. The Father loves His Son like a friend. The reason is that phileo is the form of love where there is no secret between them. That is why He used phileo.

John 5:20 continues, “(The Father) shows Him all He does. Yes, to your amazement He will show Him even greater things than these.” There is no secret between them. God has shown everything to His Son. This is phileo.

Look at John 21:15-17. I used to wonder why Peter spoke to the risen Lord like this. After meeting Peter, Jesus asked him, “Peter, do you really agape me?” If Peter was his old self, he would have just said, “Sure, of course I do.” But after he was completely broken, he became humble. So Peter answered instead, “No, sir, I only phileo you.” Jesus asked again, “Do

you agape me?" and again Peter, remembering what he did and the rooster's crow, answered, "No, sir, I only phileo you." The third time, Jesus asked, "Do you really phileo me?" This time He used phileo. Peter was hurt because Jesus asked a third time and said, "Yes, I phileo you." Peter did not use phileo out of a mistake, but this was his limit. The third time, when Jesus asked, "Can you really love me like a friend?" Peter was saying, "Yes! Of course I can at least do that." But, in reality, Jesus was asking for agape love in a different way: "Can you really love me in a special friendship without any secrets?" If it were me and I had realized this, I would have said, "Lord, even if I had 10,000 mouths, I am speechless." But Peter did not realize this yet. Anyways, the reason the Lord used phileo at the third time was to express the love relationship with God in a unique way. Phileo means "There is no secret between you and Me."

When will this special relationship be completely restored? The day Jesus returns. He will receive us as His special friends. This is so exciting. God has called us to be His special friends, but some of us are in a different relationship with Him. We must be pure so that there will be no secrets between God and us. This is God's will for us, but we are blocking His will when we do not live like this. In Amos 3:7, the word sowd means Yahweh's chamber room. "Surely the sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets." In the same way, John 15:15 says that there are no secrets between friends. God has made you His friends so that He keeps no secrets from you. God is good. This kind of relationship must be restored to you.

Thirdly, in the second half of Malachi 3:17, "I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him." This means adoption. God has become your Father. 2 Samuel 7:14, the Lord hints to David that He will become a Father to his son Solomon. This is the first time God ever talks about fatherhood in the Old Testament. "I will make you My son, and I will be your Father." This is also the great work that Jesus did when He came to this earth. God did not even spare His own Son to save us. Giving His Son to us is everything. God, thank you for giving us Jesus. Jesus, thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, thank you for coming and establishing the church.

Fourthly, 3:18 to 4:1 talks about the time of distinction. God has given us all His rewards. And now the time is coming when He will judge and destroy the wicked. Starting from the day of the Lord's first coming until the day He returns, "you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not." So who is the "you" God is talking about? He is talking to the people who said that the wicked prosper and are blessed all throughout the book of Malachi. He is talking to the wicked. Distinction means that "you will see it". In that day, the wicked will see that through God's judgment the wicked will suddenly perish and the righteous will prosper.

This is the time when the prophecy of Psalm 73:18-20 will be fulfilled. "For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked... till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!" What

the Psalmist realized is that the wicked prosper for only a short time and their destruction will surely come. In this way, the wicked will return and see the distinction between those who serve God and those who do not, and they will also see the destruction of the wicked. But they will see the righteous stand in front of God.

Now is the time. God is distinguishing even more between the wicked and the righteous. God is especially distinguishing between the pure grain and the chaff inside the church. He will continue this work until the day the Lord returns, and there will be a separation between the wicked and the righteous.

Matthew 25:31 says, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left." Even now the Lord is continually separating the sheep from the goats.

"The distinction between the righteous and the wicked". This phrase only appears in Malachi. In order to open the way for the generation of the Gospel, Malachi delicately received this prophecy and handed it over to the books of the Gospel. And Malachi talks about the process of judgment and of the end times that make up the events when Jesus returns. God separates the righteous and the wicked. The wicked will suddenly perish and the righteous will prosper. 4:1 says, "Surely the day is coming; it will be like a furnace." "In that day" and "the day like a furnace" mean the same thing. "All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble." Before, the Israelites were saying that the wicked were prosperous. But God is clearly saying that the wicked will be burned. "That day that is coming" is the day of the LORD. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them." Until now, the stubble of the wicked has not been rooted up, but when that day comes, every root of the wicked will be plucked up and God will throw them away. Therefore, are we supposed to envy the prosperity of the wicked or not? No! Absolutely not. We must not envy the world! According to Habakkuk 2:13, the nations of the world are only fuel for the fire. We must consider the world more and more pitiful and small. We must not envy the world.

The time for distinction is coming. The book of Malachi is very accurately describing the work of the Lord. Malachi is concretely describing what the Lord will do in the process of judgment starting from the first coming until the second coming. He will most definitely separate the righteous from the wicked. Who is the righteous? The one who believes. Who is the wicked? Is it those who do bad things? No. Those who do not believe are the wicked. Before, this standard was not clear. Is the person who does good a righteous person and the person who does bad a wicked person? What is the good work and what is the bad work? There was no standard. But, when Jesus came to this earth, the righteous and the wicked were divided. Therefore, you sin because you are a sinner, and not you are a sinner because you sin.

Receiving righteousness through works has a very unclear standard. For us, the con-

firmation of righteousness comes from the triangular relationship of “the righteous shall live by faith”. The root of that relationship is believing in Jesus. If you believe in Jesus, you are righteous; but if you do not, you are wicked. This is the correct standard. It is wrong if you think you are saved when your life is a mess. If you believe, then you are righteous, and the righteous shall live a righteous lifestyle. These three requirements must be fulfilled in your life. Anyways, there is a concrete standard for the separation of the righteous and the wicked. This is the amazing prophecy of Malachi that opened the way for the generation of the Gospel. Malachi is the only place that talks about the distinction of the righteous and the wicked.

4:2 says, “But for you who revere My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will gout and leap like calves released from the stall.” This “sun of righteousness” is unique to Malachi. The Israelites have never compared Yahweh to the sun. The reason was because the Gentile nations around them all worshipped the sun, so the Israelites did not compare God to the sun. The focus of this word is not on the sun itself but rather on the healing in its wings. The “sun of righteousness” is referring to Jesus. In that day when Jesus Christ returns, He will shine His wings of healing. He will return and proclaim God’s word. And just as when you lift a rock, the bugs underneath try to hide again, when the sun of righteousness comes, the wicked will hide in darkness and the righteous will come out to the light.

Jesus Christ will return and shine with healing in His wings. And so we will be free from all the oppression and bondage of sin. We will finally escape the oppression of sin. “And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.” We will be so excited that we will leap like calves.

It is so exciting to believe in God. If we accept the Lord’s first coming by faith and if we accept the light of His glory, then we will be freed from all darkness. So, we should come out to the light to receive His healing, but the problem is that we do not come out. Once you come out, you will be healed and you will be excited by the total freedom you receive.

But now, in verse 3, “Then you will trample down the wicked.” This is talking about the complete victory. “They will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things.” Right now you might be under suffering, you might not have money, and you might not have happy things happen to you. But do not worry. Why? Because we have the complete victory. For example, let’s say that I am a student and I have all the answers to the exams I will take at the end of the semester. But I see one student studying so hard for the exams. So, since I already know all the answers, I think, “Wow, how pitiful that guy is!” Why? Because I already have the answers. I have the complete victory. In the same way, for you, God already has given you the answers, the complete victory. This is peace for us. Complete victory is ours.

Finally, the conclusion is from verses 4-6. In the Hebrew Bible, Malachi does not have a chapter 4. So 4:1 is actually 3:19, 4:2 is 3:20, and so on. And some manuscripts don’t even

have verses 4-6. But a certain Yale professor said that Malachi 4:4-6 is the most important part of the Old Testament. The reason is that the conclusion of the 12 prophetic books is in verses 4-6. Verse 4 talks about Moses, who is the representative of the Law. And verses 5-6 talk about Elijah, who is the representative of the prophets. So these verses show the unification and harmonization of the Law and the prophets. Until now, the Israelites violated the Law and killed God's prophets. But now in verses 4-6, Moses and the prophets have become united.

Verse 4 talks about Moses. "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and the law I gave him at Horeb for all Israel." In Hebrew, remembering means obedience. Therefore, as Malachi makes his conclusion, he is telling the Israelites to obey the Law of God. The only way we can live is to eat the Word, repent, and obey His word. Obey!

Verses 5-6 talk about Elijah. "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes." This Elijah is a very important person. In the days of Ahab, Elijah was the mediator between God and the Israelites who had turned away from Him to worship idols. Elijah is the person who turned God's heart towards the Israelites. Elijah is the person who has had a mighty influence for over 2400 years, from B.C. 400 until today. This Elijah suddenly appears in 1 Kings 17. He had no genealogy, he did not taste death. Elijah was born 400 years before Malachi's generation. And the generation that eagerly expected the return of the Elijah who did not die was Malachi's generation.

Especially in the inter-testamental period, Elijah is mentioned and has a strong influence, such as in Sirach 48:10, 1 Enoch 89:51-59, and 4 Esdras 7:109. The book of James also mentions Elijah in 5:17-18. James had a great influence on the Jewish community, so that is why he talks about Elijah. "Elijah was a man just like us. And the heavens automatically moved according to his prayers." Elijah had such a deep influence on Judaism, especially concerning worship and ancient documents. On the Sabbath, during the Passover, and during circumcision, the Jews called the cup of wine "Elijah's cup". That is how great Elijah's influence was on their documents.

The Elijah who appears before Jesus' first coming was John the Baptist. Before His second coming, Elijah will appear again. "That day" puts both the first and second coming together. It is the same with the other prophetic books. Then who is the Elijah who will appear right before Jesus' second coming? When the Lord suddenly comes to His temple in this generation, there will be people with the mission of Elijah. They will have already prepared the way for Him. These people are the true church of God. That is why God risks His life for His church. It is God's desire for all church to prepare the way for Him. But that doesn't seem likely. The true church which God chose carries Elijah's mission to prepare the way for Jesus' second coming. You must carry out Elijah's mission, and you must prepare the way of the King. You have this mighty mission of Elijah, where all mountains will be made low and every land will be made plain before God.

There are many characteristics of the churches that carry Elijah's mission, and one

characteristic is the power of the word. The two witnesses in the book of Revelation do God's work by the mighty power of God. That happens in the end times. Another characteristic is being pure and holy like the 144,000 people who gave up their lives for the word of God. In this age, there are so many churches that have received the Jesus-vaccination and pretend to carry Elijah's mission. I believe that we will be persecuted by such churches... But that doesn't matter because we are the church that knows the complete victory. We are in the truth, and we risk our lives for the Word, and we are preparing the way of the Lord.

Verse 6 says, "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." Those who carry Elijah's mission will mediate between God the Father's heart and the children's hearts. We will show the true heart of the Father and we will teach what the Father's desire and will are. That is why we are establishing the churches that will influence in this age. As we carry out this mission, we eagerly expect the glorious day of the Lord's return.

But there is one problem. In verse 6, "...or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." The very last verse ends with a curse. But 70-80 years before Malachi was active, Zechariah prophesied in 14:11, "It will be inhabited; never will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure." No other prophet ends with a curse. So a prophet shouldn't end with a curse. What is the problem? In the Septuagint, Malachi ends with 4:4. But in the Hebrew Bible, after 4:6, verse 5 is repeated as 4:7.

Theologians and the council members who chose the canonical books were attempting something. They wanted to show that God could strike the land with a curse, but that was not His goal. God's desire was for repentance. In the process of making the canon, the theologians are showing that the end is not destruction, but rather you should repent. The end of Malachi does not focus on judgment and destruction. Its focus is "Repent!" Since the mission of Malachi is to pass something along to the generation of the Gospel, the message that is being passed along is "Repent!" So at the beginning of the books of the Gospel, we see "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!" John the Baptist signified the appearance of Elijah. And also Jesus preached, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!"

The book of Mark is a very powerful book. Just as the message of repentance opened the way for the Gospel, the reason Mark wrote his account is to provide a Gospel to be read in the service within two hours in the Gentile churches. So Mark utilizes the novel-writing style from the beginning and the climax is in 15:38, when the Roman centurion says, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" Mark wrote his Gospel so that as the churches read his explosive account for two hours during worship, they would repent and confess that Jesus is King. Mark was rejected for 1800 years, but his account is the true Gospel. Matthew and Luke based their accounts on Mark's Gospel.

The revelation of Malachi must be renewed. In order to open the age of the Gospel, Malachi received a delicate and detailed revelation concerning the distinction between the

righteous and the wicked. It is like feeding a baby with finely ground beef so the baby can easily eat it.

What is our focus? Spirituality! If you become arrogant because of your spirituality, then there is no reason for you to pursue spirituality. Truth! If you become arrogant because of the truth, then you should not listen to it anymore. It would be better for you to attend a sloppy church. You must never be arrogant. You must be humble. Yulbang Church has passed through a time of 15 years, and we just can't be arrogant, and the road ahead is even farther and tougher. We must travel on the narrower road. We have never gotten the job done easily because of the multiple attacks by Satan. Even so, we have nothing to worry about because we have the complete victory. We will go forward. There is no stopping the work God will do through us. God will do His work through us, and He will establish the churches that influence the whole world through us. The glorious work we do must prepare the way of the Lord's return. I bless you that you will be restored to carry out Elijah's glorious mission!